

SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



Crisis Management in Late Antiquity (410–590 CE)

A Survey of the Evidence
from Episcopal Letters



By
PAULINE ALLEN AND BRONWEN NEIL

BRILL

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Supplements
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Vigiliae Christianae

Texts and Studies of
Early Christian Life and Language

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ABBREVIATIONS

Allen, Neil, Mayer, <i>Preaching Poverty</i>	P. Allen, B. Neil, W. Mayer, <i>Preaching Poverty in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Realities</i> , Arbeiten zur Kirchen- und Theologiegeschichte 28 (Leipzig, 2009)
ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, series 1, 4 vols. in 27 parts, ed. E. Schwartz (Strasbourg, 1914; Berlin, Leipzig, 1924–); ed. J. Straub (Berlin, 1971)
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers (Westminster, MD, New York, 1946–)
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis (Turnhout, 1966–)
Brown, <i>Poverty and Leadership</i>	P.R.L. Brown, <i>Poverty and Leadership in the Later Roman Empire</i> , The Menahem Stern Jerusalem Lectures (Hanover, NH, London, 2002)
CCSG	Corpus Christianorum Series Graeca (Turnhout, 1977–)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout, 1953–)
<i>CEn</i>	<i>Codex encyclicus</i> , ACO 2/5, pp. 9–98
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Codex Justinianus</i> , ed. P. Krueger, <i>Corpus iuris civilis volumen secundum. Codex Justinianus</i> (Berlin, 1905; repr. Hildesheim, 1989)
<i>CPG</i>	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum</i> , ed. M. Geerard, vols. 1–5, Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout, 1974–1987)
<i>CPG Supp.</i>	<i>Clavis Patrum Graecorum. Supplementum</i> , eds. M. Geerard, J. Noret, Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout, 1998)
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Clavis Patrum Latinorum</i> , ed. E. Dekkers, 3rd ed., Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout, 1995)
CSCO, Scr. Syr.	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium Scriptores Syri (Leuven, 1903–)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna, 1866–)
<i>CTh</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> , eds. P. Krüger, T. Mommsen, P.M. Meyer, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1902; repr. Hildesheim, 1990)
Coustant	<i>Epistolae Romanorum Pontificum et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Clemente I usque ad Innocentium III</i> , ed. P. Coustant (Paris, 1721)
<i>DM</i>	<i>Documenta ad origines monophysitarum illustrandas</i> , ed. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 17, Scr. Syr. 17 (Paris, Leipzig, 1908; repr. Louvain, 1962); trans. in CSCO 103, Scr. Syr. 52 (Louvain, 1933; repr. Louvain, 1965)
<i>EDP</i>	<i>Enciclopedia dei Papi</i> , 3 vols. (Rome, 2000)
<i>Ep./Epp.</i>	<i>Epistola/Epistolae</i>

FOTC	Fathers of the Church (Washington DC, 1947–)
Freund, <i>Rise of the Monophysite Movement</i>	W.H.C. Freund, <i>The Rise of the Monophysite Movement: Chapters in the History of the Church in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries</i> (Cambridge, 1972)
Frag./Fragm.	Fragment/Fragments
GCS NF	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller. Neue Folge (Berlin, 1995–)
Grillmeier, CCT 2, part 1	A. Grillmeier with T. Hainthaler, <i>Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche</i> 2/1, <i>Das Konzil von Chalcedon (451). Rezeption und Widerspruch</i> (Freiburg, 1986; rev. ed. 1991); Eng. Trans. P. Allen, J. Cawte, <i>Christ in Christian Tradition</i> 2. <i>From the Council of Chalcedon (451) to Gregory the Great (590–604)</i> , part 1. <i>Reception and Contradiction</i> (London, UK, Louisville, KY, 1987)
Grillmeier, CCT 2, part 2	A. Grillmeier with T. Hainthaler, <i>Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche</i> 2/2, <i>Die Kirche von Konstantinopel im 6. Jahrhundert</i> (Freiburg, 1989); Eng. trans. J. Cawte, P. Allen, <i>Christ in Christian Tradition</i> 2, part 2. <i>The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century</i> (London, UK, Louisville, KY, 1995)
Grillmeier, CCT 2, part 3	A. Grillmeier with T. Hainthaler, T. Bou Mansour, L. Abramowski, L., <i>Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche</i> 2/3. <i>Die Kirchen von Jerusalem und Antiochien nach 451 bis 600</i> , ed. T. Hainthaler (Freiburg, 2002). Eng. trans. T. Hainthaler, T. Bou Mansour, L. Abramowski, A. Louth; Eng. trans. M. Ehrhardt, <i>Christ in Christian Tradition</i> 2, part 3. <i>The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch</i> (Oxford, forthcoming)
Grillmeier, CCT 2, part 4	A. Grillmeier with T. Hainthaler, <i>Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche</i> 2/4. <i>Die Kirche von Alexandrien mit Nubien und Äthiopien nach 451</i> (Freiburg, 1990); Eng. trans. O.C. Dean, <i>Christ in Christian Tradition</i> 2, part 4. <i>The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451</i> (London, UK, Louisville, KY, 1996)
HE	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>
Jaffé	<i>Regesta pontificum Romanorum ab condita ecclesia ad annum post Christum natum MCXCVIII</i> , eds. P. Jaffé, F. Kaltenbrunner, 2nd ed. 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1885)
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LAHR	Late Antique History and Religion (Leuven, 2007–)
LP	<i>Le Liber Pontificalis</i> , eds. L. Duchesne, C. Vogel, 2nd ed., 3 vols. (Paris, 1955–1957)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica (Berlin, 1926–)
AA	Auctores Antiquissimi
Chron. Min.	Chronica Minora
Epp.	Epistolae

SS	Scriptores
NBA	Nuova Biblioteca Agostiniana, <i>Opere di Sant'Agostino</i> (Rome, 1965–)
NF	neue Folge
ns	new series
PG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, 161 vols. (Paris, 1857–1866)
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols. (Paris, 1844–1864)
PLRE 2	<i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , eds. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris, vol. 2, AD 395–527 (Cambridge, 1980)
PO	Patrologia Orientalis (Paris, 1907–)
RAC	<i>Realenzyklopädie für Antike und Christentum</i>
RE	<i>Realenzyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , ed. Pauly-Wissowa (Stuttgart, 1893–)
SC	Sources chrétiennes (Paris, 1943–)
StP	<i>Studia Patristica</i> (Leuven, 1957–)
TDST	Textus et Documenta. <i>Studia Theologica</i> (Rome, 1932–)
Thiel	<i>Epistulae Romanorum Pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a s. Hilario usque ad Pelagium II</i> , ed. A. Thiel, Fasciculus 1, 2nd ed. (Braunsberg, 1887; repr. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 2004)
TRE	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie</i> , 36 vols. (Berlin, 1976–2004)
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool, 1988–)
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WSA	Works of Saint Augustine for the Twenty-First Century

CHAPTER ONE

CRISIS IN LATE ANTIQUITY

RATIONALE

Appropriate responses to environmental and social crises—by individuals, communities, governments, religious and charitable organizations—are increasingly under focus in the twenty-first century. The focus of our research is episcopal crisis management in Late Antiquity, based principally on bishops' letters in Greek and Latin from the fifth and sixth centuries (410–590 CE). The time-frame has been chosen to exclude at one end the letters of John Chrysostom and at the other end the register of Gregory the Great, both of whose letters have received recent scholarly attention.¹ All of John's surviving letters date from his period of exile in Armenia (404–407), a curious phenomenon which skews the evidence of his epistolographical activity. Due to the rationale behind the collection of John's letters we have no information whatsoever in his epistolary corpus about his time as a priest in Antioch, and no systematic data about his period as archbishop of Constantinople. In general, then, we are thrown back on the evidence from his homilies for crises other than that induced by his own exile from his church in Constantinople. For this reason we have excluded John's letters from the corpus under discussion here.²

¹ Poverty in the letters of John Chrysostom has been sufficiently analysed in the "Poverty, Welfare in Late Antiquity" project of the Centre for Early Christian Studies at Australian Catholic University. These letters are not fruitful for evidence of other kinds of crisis since they derive from John's period of exile, not from his time in episcopal office. See Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, pp. 69–117. For Gregory I, see J.C.R. Martyn (intro., trans., notes), *The Letters of Gregory the Great*, Medieval Sources in Translation 40 (Toronto, 2004); B. Neil, M. dal Santo, eds., *A Companion to Gregory the Great* (Leiden, Boston, forthcoming).

² John's letters from exile will be dealt with briefly in Chapter 3, *infra*; see also W. Mayer, "John Chrysostom as Crisis Manager: Reading Back into the Years in Constantinople", in eds. D.C. Sim, P. Allen, *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts as Crisis Management Literature. Thematic Studies from the Centre for Early Christian Studies*, Library of New Testament Studies 445 (London, New York, 2012), pp. 129–143; W. Mayer, "The Bishop as Crisis Manager: An Exploration of Early Fifth-Century Episcopal Strategy", in eds. D. Luckensmeyer, P. Allen, *Studies of Religion and Politics in the Early Christian Centuries*, Early Christian Studies 13 (Strathfield, 2010), pp. 159–171.

So far there has been no study of the processes or ideology of episcopal crisis management or crisis management in general in Late Antiquity. This episcopal role became increasingly important as bishops assumed or were given roles previously assigned to imperial officials.³ Late-antique episcopal policies of religious inclusion/exclusion in response to crisis find contemporary resonance in the hardening of definitions of identity and political boundaries between Christian, Jewish and Islamic societies post-September 2001. The outcomes of such policies in the religious communities of Constantinople have been studied primarily in relation to hagiography, i.e. the *Lives* of saints,⁴ but not in relation to episcopal letters, which provide harder evidence. Maier points the way to the use of letters and homilies in his sociological analysis of the politics of orthodoxy in fifth-century Rome.⁵ A similar approach will offer a broader analysis of the politics of crisis management in the eastern and western parts of the Roman empire over two critical centuries in Mediterranean history.

Due to the disproportionate influence of Brown's work, *Poverty and Leadership*,⁶ scholars have examined the role of the late-antique bishop as "lover of the poor", "champion of the weak" and "civic leader" in the field of evergetism or public giving, without looking at the broader influence of the bishop in managing social and religious crises. Brown defended his characterization of the fourth- and fifth-century bishop mostly from sixth-century sources. A shift certainly seems to have occurred in the fifth century in the way the bishop was seen, or expected, to act towards the poor and other victims of crisis, but Brown provides no convincing or systematic evidence for when or why that change occurred. This volume offers a more sustained treatment of letters on the theme of crisis than has been available up to the present, and carries the timeframe forward into the crucial sixth century.

While crisis in the later Roman empire was frequently cast in religious terms as a way of making sense of a cascade of events that were beyond human control and individual experience, such meaning-making did not appear in episcopal letters, but was confined to homilies, chronicles, histories and literary prefaces. Letters were more concerned with practical aims,

³ B. Neil, "Imperial Benefactions to the Fifth-Century Roman Church", in eds. G. Nathan, L. Garland, Basileia: *Essays on Imperium and Culture in Honour of E.M. and M.J. Jeffreys*, Byzantina Australiensia 17 (Brisbane, 2011), pp. 55–66.

⁴ P. Hatlie, *The Monks and Monasteries of Constantinople c. 350–850* (Cambridge, 2008).

⁵ H.O. Maier, "'Manichee!': Leo the Great and the Orthodox Panopticon", *J ECS* 4/4 (1996), pp. 441–460.

⁶ See Abbreviations.

such as restoring security and predictability to lives in upheaval. The bishop played a key role in defining what counted as a crisis and what did not. Due to the limited means of information-transfer available to him, his terms of reference were mainly local. This parochialism was a two-edged sword: the bishop could control outside knowledge of what was going on in his own diocese, but equally he could be kept in the dark as to what was happening outside his own region. Unlike chronicles and ecclesiastical histories, which were necessarily written some years—even centuries—after catastrophes occurred, letters offered more immediate responses to regional crises that had personal impact on the episcopal writer. They were crucial in connecting local personalities and those people in need as a result of crisis, with their wider networks.

DEFINING “CRISIS” IN LATE ANTIQUITY

It will be useful at the outset to outline our understanding of the word “crisis”. Much has been written in recent years on various crises in antiquity,⁷ mainly with reference to transformative events of epic proportions, such as the turmoil in the western empire in the third century, the fall of Rome, the beginnings of Arab hegemony, and so on. It has also been suggested that instead of the word “crisis” we should be using terms like “change”, “transformation”, or even “anarchy”.⁸ Given our concentration in this volume on letters from Greek- and Latin-speaking bishops, it will become obvious that the crises with which we are concerned are mostly of a local or regional character; even what we might term perennial crises in human history, like violence, acute poverty, famine and the plight of displaced or trafficked persons, are usually dealt with at a local level, and most frequently by bishops.

Another constant in all crises in Late Antiquity is that they are defined from above, that is, by the emperor, bishop, or other civic leader who had the

⁷ A representative sample would include Av. Cameron, “The Perception of Crisis”, *Settimane di studio del centro italiana sull’alto medioevo* 45 (1998), pp. 9–31; C. Witschel, *Krise-Rezession-Stagnation? Das Westen des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999); O. Hekster, G. de Kleijn, D. Slootjes, eds., *Crises and the Roman Empire*. Proceedings of the Seventh Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire, Nijmegen, 20–24 June, 2006 (Leiden, 2007).

⁸ See, for example, Cameron, “The Perception of Crisis”, p. 10; W. Liebeschuetz, “Was There a Crisis of the Third Century?”, in eds. Hekster, de Kleijn, Slootjes, *Crises and the Roman Empire*, pp. 11–20, at p. 11.

power to do something about them, notwithstanding the previous criterion that they were usually dealt with locally. Finally, these crises were a normal part of everyday life in the fifth and sixth centuries. Without extensive communication networks, apart from letters, the capacity for averting or even warning of natural and man-made catastrophes was extremely limited. To sum up, the catastrophes and crises treated in our episcopal letters of the fifth and sixth centuries had three dominant characteristics. They were 1. regional; 2. personal, in their effect on the bishop; and 3. normal, to a degree which the twenty-first-century reader might find difficult to comprehend. This will emerge from the case-studies presented in chapters 3 to 7 below.

OVERVIEW OF THE VOLUME

The volume is focused on a critical period in European history, the fifth and sixth centuries, when social and religious disturbances were rife, a period which, however, has received little attention to date from the perspective of the bishop and of letter-writing as a tool of social control and information-transfer. Apart from structural and episodic poverty in this period, we have to consider as crises the following six problems, many of which have received individual or partial treatment in the secondary literature but not from the perspective of the bishop.

Population Displacement

Population displacement in this period was usually the result of religious dissent and/or barbarian invasion. It could also be the result of the poverty cycle and food shortages, which forced inhabitants of rural areas to seek employment and handouts in cities. Displaced persons included exiles, prisoners of war,⁹ refugees and asylum-seekers. These phenomena and the strategies adopted by bishops to deal with them are the subject of Chapter 3.

⁹ See the studies on those taken into captivity: in North Africa, C. Lepelley, "Liberté, colonat et esclavage d'après la Lettre 24^e: la juridiction épiscopale 'de liberali causa'", in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 329–342; in Italy: G.D. Dunn, "The Validity of Marriage in Cases of Captivity: The Letter of Innocent I to Probus", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 83 (2007), pp. 107–121; and in Gaul, W. Klingshirn, "Charity and Power: The Ransoming of Captives in Sub-Roman Gaul", *Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985), pp. 183–203.

Natural Disasters

Catastrophic natural events included drought, famine,¹⁰ earthquakes,¹¹ epidemic disease,¹² and climate change.¹³ The socio-economic impact of such disasters and episcopal responses to these events are considered in Chapter 4. Their representation in episcopal letters is also examined there. Famine, in particular, was usually seen not as a natural disaster but as a failure of leaders—whether the emperor, provincial governor or bishop—to manage the grain supply equitably. Episcopal attempts to make social and religious meaning out of natural catastrophes varied dramatically, as we shall see.

¹⁰ R. Dirks, "Social Responses during Severe Food Shortages and Famine", *Current Anthropology* 21 (1980), pp. 21–44, offers a survey of cross-cultural regularities in the physiological and social-psychological consequences of famine. See also A.J.B. Sirks, *Food for Rome: the Legal Structure of the Transportation and Processing of Supplies for the Imperial Distributions in Rome and Constantinople* (Amsterdam, 1991), *passim*, on the *ammona* in Rome and Constantinople; and B. Sirks, "The Food Distributions in Rome and Constantinople: Imperial Power and Continuity", in ed. A. Kolb, *Herrschaftsstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis: Konzepte, Prinzipien und Strategien der Administration im römischen Kaiserreich* (Berlin, 2006), pp. 35–44. On the famine in late fourth-century Cappadocia, see S.R. Holman, "The Hungry Body: Famine, Poverty and Identity in Basil's Hom. 8", *J ECS* 7 (1999), pp. 338–363.

¹¹ E. Guidoboni, A. Comastri, G. Traina, *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes in the Mediterranean Area up to the 10th Century*, rev. ed. of *I terremoti prima del Mille in Italia e nell'area mediterranea*, trans. B. Phillips (Rome, 1994). On natural disasters of various kinds in antiquity, see the collections of essays in eds. E. Olshausen, H. Sonnabend, *Naturkatastrophen in der antiken Welt: Stuttgarter Kolloquium zur historischen Geographie des Altertums* 6, 1996, *Geographica Historica* 10 (Stuttgart, 1998); H. Sonnabend, *Naturkatastrophen in der Antike. Wahrnehmung–Deutung–Management* (Stuttgart, Weimar, 1999); D. Groh, M. Kempe, F. Mauelshagen, eds., *Naturkatastrophen. Beiträge zu ihrer Deutung, Wahrnehmung und Darstellung in Text und Bild von der Antike bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, *Literatur und Anthropologie* 13 (Tübingen, 2003), especially the contributions of H. Sonnabend, pp. 37–44, M. Meier, pp. 45–64 and C. Rohr, pp. 65–78.

¹² See D. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence in the Late Roman and Early Byzantine Empire: A Systematic Survey of Subsistence Crises and Epidemics*, *Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs* 9 (Aldershot, 2003).

¹³ I.G. Telelis, "Weather and Climate as Factors Affecting Land Transport and Communications in Byzantium", *Byzantion* 77 (2007), pp. 432–462; idem, *Μετεωρολογικά φαινόμενα και κλίμα στο Βυζάντιο (Meteorologika phainomena kai klima sto Byzantio)*, 2 vols., *Πονήματα. Συμβολές στην έρευνα της ελληνικής και λατινικής γραμματείας/ Ponemata* 5,1–2 (Athens, 2004), with an English summary; P. Fahrquarson, "Byzantium, Planet Earth and the Solar System", in eds. P. Allen, E. Jeffreys, *The Sixth Century. End or Beginning?*, *Byzantina Australiensia* 10 (Brisbane, 1996), pp. 262–269; J. Koder, "Climate Change in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries?", in eds. Allen, Jeffreys, *The Sixth Century*, pp. 270–285.

Religious Disputes

Persecution of existing sects and heresies, such as Manicheism, Priscillianism and Pelagianism continued throughout the period. The major new religious controversies of our period were the Nestorian controversy, the Eutychian heresy and so-called “monophysitism”, the Acacian schism, the Origenist controversy and the Three Chapters dispute. Four ecumenical councils were held in an attempt to settle these disputes. Bishops from East and West were called to the ecumenical councils held at Ephesus (431 CE), Chalcedon (451 CE) and Constantinople (553 CE), as well as the notorious Robber Council of 449.¹⁴ The roles of the patriarchs of the ecclesiastical pentarchy—Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and Rome—were crucial in determining the outcomes that flowed from each ecumenical gathering. Religious crisis reached a peak in the decades following the Council of Chalcedon, with imperial interventions to enforce orthodoxy, and violent reactions against it by the non-Chalcedonians.¹⁵ Such imperial interventions were often the result of letters of petition from bishops in dioceses where heresy or religious controversy precipitated crises. Local synods too provide valuable evidence of bishops’ interventions in religious controversy. The perception and treatment of “extremists” is inextricably linked with crises of religious origins. These will be studied further in Chapter 5.

Violent Conflict

Violent conflict arose frequently in this period of wars, barbarian invasions and gang fighting, but most particularly in the context of religious disputes. Pagan-Christian clashes which had been rife in the third and fourth centuries continued to plague inhabitants of major cities in the fifth,¹⁶ and

¹⁴ The *acta* of these councils are found in ACO. See further R. Price, M. Gaddis, trans., *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, TTH 45 (Liverpool, 2005); R. Price, trans., *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553 with Related Texts on the Three Chapters Controversy*, 2 vols., TTH 51 (Liverpool, 2009).

¹⁵ See P. Allen, “The Definition and Enforcement of Orthodoxy”, in eds. Av. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins, M. Whitby, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 14. *Late Antiquity: Empire and Successors, A.D. 425–600* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 811–834; S. Ashbrook Harvey, *Asceticism and Society in Crisis: John of Ephesus and the Lives of the Eastern Saints* (Berkeley, 1990); C. Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-Century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian* (Oxford, New York, 2006).

¹⁶ For the fifth-century literary interpretations of the usurpation of the pagan intellectual Eugenius and the general Arbogastes (392–394) as a pagan-Christian conflict, see M. Salzmann, “Ambrose and the Usurpation of Arbogastes and Eugenius: Reflections on Pagan-Christian Conflict Narratives”, *J ECS* 18/2 (2010), pp. 191–223.

hostilities between Christians and Jews continued to gain in strength.¹⁷ In the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon, religious divisions frequently manifested themselves in violent clashes. A significant source of external conflict in the fifth and sixth centuries were clashes with various “barbarian” tribes in the western Roman empire, such as the Goths, Vandals and Huns, and wars against the Persians in the east. The Gothic wars in Italy during the first half of the sixth century also produced much carnage and loss of life. Such conflicts usually acted as catalysts for other types of crisis, including poverty, food shortage, epidemic disease, capture of prisoners and population displacement, all of which warranted intervention on the part of bishops. Contested episcopal elections were also the occasion for riots, especially in the streets of Rome. These very different kinds of conflict will be studied in Chapter 5.

Social Abuses

Social abuses in this period included extortionate interest rates, people-trafficking, indentured labour of free children and corruption within the church and without. Corruption in Late Antiquity was as endemic as it was critical, just as in many modern societies, and it encompassed both secular and ecclesiastical spheres. Bishops tried to manage this phenomenon as best they could, sometimes with enthusiastic participation. Writing letters of reproof and threatening deposition to priests and bishops who refused to comply were two popular strategies, as was the deployment of *defensores ecclesiae*, those delegated by bishops to oversee the financial management of distant sees. Secular *defensores* were appointed to protect the poor from tax extortion, but these were often guilty of abuse against those they were supposed to protect.¹⁸ Corruption within the church was also rife,

¹⁷ E.g. the attacks by the populace against synagogues in Alexandria during the patriarchate of Cyril, registered in Socrates of Constantinople, *HE* 7.13.15; ed. G.C. Hansen, *Socrates: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS NF 1 (Berlin, 1995), p. 359; eds. G.C. Hansen, C. Günther, P. Maraval, *Socrates, Histoire ecclésiastique Livre VII*, SC 506 (Paris, 2007), p. 52, 51–56. See S. Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic* (London, New York, 2004), pp. 36–38 on the conflict between Cyril and the Alexandrian Jews.

¹⁸ D. Grodzynski, “Pauvres et indigents, vils et plebeians. (Une étude terminologique sur le vocabulaire des petites gens dans le Code Théodosien)”, *Studia et documenta historiae et iuris* 53 (Rome 1987), pp. 140–218 at p. 199; Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, p. 57; C. Lepelley, “Facing Wealth and Poverty: Defining Augustine’s Social Doctrine”, *The Saint Augustine Lecture*, 2006, *Augustinian Studies* 38 (2007), pp. 1–17 at p. 6.

particularly simony, bribery and the alienation of church property for personal financial gain.¹⁹ These secular and clerical abuses are dealt with in Chapter 6.

Breakdown of the Structures of Dependence

The various crises reviewed above led to the eventual breakdown of classical structures of social and financial dependence. The stress on public and private resources resulted in wide-spread poverty throughout the later Roman empire. The evidence of the mid-fourth to mid-fifth centuries suggests that the gap between the very rich and the very poor increased in this period.²⁰ Various regional studies have been made of bishops' responses to poverty and the poor, using for the most part homiletic evidence, such as Freu's study of Italian bishops' homilies,²¹ and Holman's analysis of Basil and the two Gregories' responses to the poor in Cappadocia.²² The breakdown of structures of social and financial dependence, and the strategies adopted by bishops to deal with these problems, including recourse to the civil legal system and the bishop's court (*audientia episcopalis*), are the subject of Chapter 7.

The phrase "structures of dependence", used by Nicholas Purcell,²³ neatly encapsulates both the causes and consequences of a highly stratified social structure, although people in Late Antiquity remained oblivious to continuing generational poverty and the structural reasons for that phenomenon. All the aforementioned crises—population displacement, natural disasters, religious conflict and social abuses—had a great impact on the stability of existing structures of dependence. In the final chapter we offer some conclusions regarding emerging trends and regional and/or chronological differences in episcopal crisis management. We endeavour to ascertain the

¹⁹ For allegations of bribery against Cyril of Alexandria see L.R. Wickham, ed., trans., *Cyril of Alexandria. Select Letters*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford, 1983), p. 66 n. 8.

²⁰ Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*. See also now G.D. Dunn, "Poverty as a Social Issue in Augustine's Homilies", *StP* 49 (2010), pp. 175–180; S. Sitzler, "Deviance and Destitution: Social Poverty in the Homilies of John Chrysostom", *StP* 47 (2010), pp. 261–266; B. Neil, "Blessed are the Rich: Leo the Great and the Roman Poor", *StP* 44 (2010), pp. 533–548.

²¹ C. Freu, *Les figures du pauvre dans les sources italiennes de l'antiquité tardive*, Études d'archéologie et d'histoire ancienne (Paris, 2007).

²² Holman, *The Hungry are Dying*.

²³ N. Purcell, "The Populace of Rome in Late Antiquity: Problems of Classification, Historical Description", in ed. W.V. Harris, *The Transformations of URBS ROMA in Late Antiquity*, The Proceedings of a Conference held at the University of Rome "La Sapienza", at the American Academy in Rome, Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 33 (Portsmouth, RI, 1999), pp. 135–161 at p. 152.

success or adequacy of episcopal responses to crisis, and to identify those who fell through the gaps of episcopal care.

Each chapter will be backed up by evidence from case-studies of fifth- and sixth-century bishops dealing with particular crises through letter-writing in Greek and Latin. The evidence of letters must be weighed against other evidence, whether literary, material or documentary, to gain an idea of what is left out of the epistolary record, either by accident or deliberate omission. The methodological problems associated with using letters as a source on episcopal crisis management will be treated in Chapter 2. An appendix lists all those authors whose letters we have used as evidence, their modern editions and other literary outputs.

CONCLUSION

One of the major challenges faced by anyone approaching late-antique crisis is the need to jettison unhelpful assumptions which govern contemporary understandings of such questions as: What constitutes a crisis and for whom is it a crisis? What constitutes an appropriate response to crisis? Who holds responsibility for crisis management? The answer to those questions in the fifth and sixth centuries will prove markedly different from our own.

Many contemporary social and environmental crises—natural disasters, climate change, population displacement, the gap between rich and poor, religious disputes, gang violence, social abuses, and an overloaded legal system—find resonances in the turbulent era of the later Roman empire, 410–590 CE. However, any attempt to anchor in their historical antecedents contemporary responses to crisis is limited by the huge gulf between those centuries and our own “information age”. As we demonstrated in a previous study comparing contemporary and late-antique responses to refugees and asylum-seekers,²⁴ the letter was a crucial vehicle for maintaining and wielding episcopal authority in a crisis. In fact, the letter was the primary vehicle of information transfer between significant social figures, who were separated often by vast distances. Letters allowed the increasingly powerful bishop to convey religious and social policies to a broad audience, in his own city and beyond. *In absentia*, bishops used letters to maintain and extend their own networks of influence, offer consolation, impose clerical

²⁴ B. Neil, P. Allen, “Displaced Persons: Reflections from Late Antiquity on a Contemporary Crisis”, *Pacifica* 24/1 (2011), pp. 29–42.

discipline and effect social exclusion, as befitted the sort of crisis in play. What stands out in the late-antique context is the dearth of alternative strategies available even to such a powerful civic leader as the bishop. On the other hand, the testimony of episcopal letters allows us to see that late-antique bishops were quite willing to intervene personally, even from exile, on behalf of individuals in their sphere of influence who were in crisis. Any attempt to ascertain the success or adequacy of episcopal responses in the fifth and sixth centuries must eschew the application of modern standards and expectations.

CHAPTER TWO

STUDYING LATE-ANTIQUE CRISIS MANAGEMENT THROUGH LETTERS

STATUS QUAESTIONIS

Bishops in Christian antiquity were required to respond to a number of larger or smaller crises, long- or short-term, particularly as bishops came to take the place of local imperial officials. The letters which bishops wrote to each other, to secular officials, to monastics, and to laypeople are a precious source of information about how they responded to critical situations, as we saw in Chapter 1, but the many letters themselves have never been subjected to systematic investigation. Over the past 25 years scholars have paid increasing attention to the phenomenon of bishops as late-antique leaders. One of the first authors to do so was Lizzi, who confined her research to the eastern Roman empire;¹ she was followed by the now much-cited collection of essays on the role of the bishop with regard to the city.² We have already mentioned Brown's influential book, *Poverty and Leadership*, which presented the late-antique bishop as "governor of the poor";³ and inspired works concentrating on the leadership role of the bishop.⁴ The mechanics of episcopal succession were treated by Norton,⁵ and his work inspired the international symposium on "Episcopal Succession in Late Antiquity".⁶

¹ Lizzi, *Il potere*.

² É. Rebillard, C. Sotinel, eds., *L'évêque dans la cité du IV^e au V^e siècle: Image et autorité*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 248 (Rome, 1998).

³ Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*, pp. 45–73.

⁴ Such as E. Elm, *Die Macht der Weisheit: Das Bild des Bischofs in der Vita Augustini des Possidius und anderen spätantiken und frühmittelalterlichen Bischofsviten*, Studies in the History of Christian Thought 109 (Leiden, 2003); A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World Yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA, London, 2004); and C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity. The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, 2005).

⁵ P. Norton, *Episcopal Elections 250–600: Hierarchy and Popular Will in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2007).

⁶ J. Leemans et al., eds., *Episcopal Elections in Late Antiquity*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 119 (Berlin, 2011).

The role of the bishop of Rome as a major civic leader in the West has been the subject of increasing attention.⁷ While the role of late-antique bishop has rightly risen to prominence as a result of this international research, the current volume is the first to study systematically the role of the bishop in crisis management in general and as reflected in bishops' letters in Late Antiquity. Indeed, relatively few studies of late-antique letter-writers exist at all. Letters of Gallic bishops have fared better than most, with several recent studies devoted to the letters of Avitus of Vienne, Ruricius of Limoges and Faustus of Riez.⁸ To take a representative sample from the bishops to be studied in our project, there are published studies of the letters of Paulinus of Nola,⁹ Synesius of Cyrene,¹⁰ Augustine of Hippo,¹¹

⁷ Witness to the surge of interest in this topic are the following studies: M. Salzman, "Leo in Rome: The Evolution of Episcopal Authority in the Fifth Century", in eds. G. Bonamente, R. Lizzi Testa, *Istituzioni, carismi ed esercizio del potere (IV–VI secolo d.C.)* (Bari, 2010), pp. 343–356; K. Sessa, *The Formation of Papal Authority in Late Antiquity: Roman Bishops and the Domestic Sphere* (Cambridge, 2012); eadem, "Exceptionality and Invention: Silvester and the Late Antique 'Papacy' at Rome", *StP* 46 (2010), pp. 77–94; K. Uhalde, "The Sinful Subject: Doing Penance in Rome", *StP* 44 (2010), pp. 405–414; G. Demacopoulos, "Gregory the Great and the Appeal to Petrine Authority", *StP* 48 (2010), pp. 333–348; M. Sághy, "*Amator Castitatis*: Pope Damasus and the Politics of Asceticism", *StP* 45 (2010), pp. 49–54; and the contributions of G.D. Dunn, B. Neil, M. Sághy, G. Thompson, G. Demacopoulos and K. Uhalde to the Sixteenth International Conference in Patristic Studies, 2011, to be published in ed. G.D. Dunn, *The Bishop of Rome in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, forthcoming). The contributions over the last decade of M. Humphries, K. Cooper, J. Hillner and C. Leyser should also be acknowledged, especially their essays in eds. K. Cooper, J. Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900* (Cambridge, 2007).

⁸ E.g. I.N. Wood, "Letters and Letter-Collections from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages: The Prose Works of Avitus of Vienne", in ed. M.A. Meyer, *The Culture of Christendom* (London, 1993), 29–43; D.R. Shanzer, I.N. Wood (trans.), *Avitus of Letter and Selected Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool, 2002); M. Neri (ed. and trans.), *Ruricio di Limoges. Lettere* (Pisa, 2009); M. Neri, *Dio, l'anima e l'uomo. L'epistolario di Fausto di Riez* (Roma, 2011). On Gallic letters in general see R.W. Mathisen, "Epistolography, Literary Circles, and Family Ties in Late Roman Gaul," *Transactions of the American Philological Society* 111 (1981), pp. 95–109; and the collected essays in eds. R.W. Mathisen, D.R. Shanzer, *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul. Revisiting the Sources* (Ashgate, 2001).

⁹ Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel*.

¹⁰ D. Roques, *Études sur la correspondance de Synésios de Cyrène*, Collection Latomus 205 (Brussels, 1989).

¹¹ F. Morgenstern, *Die Briefpartner des Augustinus von Hippo. Prosopographische, sozial- und ideologiegeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Bochum, 1993); P. Allen, "The Horizons of a Bishop's World: The Letters of Augustine of Hippo", in eds. W. Mayer, P. Allen, L. Cross, *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, vol. 4, *The Spiritual Life* (Strathfield, 2006), pp. 327–337; eadem, "It's in the Post: Techniques and Difficulties of Letter-Writing in Antiquity with regard to Augustine of Hippo", A.D. Trendall Memorial Lecture 2005, *The Australian Academy of the Humanities, Proceedings 2005* (Canberra, 2006), pp. 111–129.

Leo of Rome,¹² Sidonius Apollinaris,¹³ Theodoret of Cyrrhus¹⁴ and Severus of Antioch.¹⁵

A number of perspectives on crisis management in Late Antiquity have received individual attention in the past two or three decades. In terms of western (Latin) sources, C. Witschel offered a study of crises of the third century, presented according to the regions of the western Roman empire in which they occurred.¹⁶ M. Salzman has been working on religious responses to crisis for some years in relation to Jerome, Leo the Great and Gelasius in fifth-century Rome.¹⁷ In terms of eastern (Greek) sources, the best study to date remains that of Holman on the Cappadocian bishops and their approaches to economic and environmental crises, especially drought, which resulted in famine, unemployment, slavery and extortion.¹⁸ Holman's research focused mainly on Greek homiletic evidence in translation, and concludes with the end of the fourth century. No comparable study of the Syrian material has yet been made.

The bishops of Rome adopted conscientious, consistent, and elaborate bureaucratic strategies to archive much of their correspondence. Our findings complement G. Dunn's ongoing work on the letters of Innocent I, at the beginning of our timeframe (401/2–417),¹⁹ and also round out the partial

¹² S. Pietrini, *Religio e ius romanum nell'epistolario di Leone Magno*, Materiali per una palinogenesi delle costituzioni tardo-imperiali 6 (Milan, 2002); B. Neil, "On True Humility: An Anonymous Letter on Poverty and the Female Ascetic", in eds. Mayer, Allen, Cross, *The Spiritual Life*, pp. 233–246; eadem, *Leo the Great*, The Early Church Fathers (London, New York, 2009).

¹³ J. Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome, A.D. 407–485* (Oxford, 1994); J.A. van Waarden, *Writing to Survive. A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris. Letters Book 7*, vol. 1: *The Episcopal Letters 1–11*, LAHR 2 (Leuven, 2010).

¹⁴ M.M. Wagner, "A Chapter in Byzantine Epistolography: The Letters of Theodoret of Cyrus", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1948), pp. 121–179.

¹⁵ P. Allen, C.T.R. Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, The Early Church Fathers (London, New York, 2004); P. Allen, "The Syrian Church through Bishops' Eyes: The Letters of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Severus of Antioch", *StP* 42 (2006), pp. 3–21.

¹⁶ Witschel, *Krise-Rezession-Stagnation*.

¹⁷ We note M. Salzman's unpublished public lecture at Catholic University of America, Washington DC, on "Episcopal Responses to Crisis in the Fifth-Century Roman Empire", on 8 April 2010; and her forthcoming chapter, "Reconsidering a Relationship: Pope Leo of Rome and Prosper of Aquitaine," in ed. G.D. Dunn, *The Bishop of Rome in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, forthcoming).

¹⁸ S.R. Holman, *The Hungry are Dying: Beggars and Bishops in Roman Cappadocia*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁹ G.D. Dunn, "Roman Primacy in the Correspondence between Innocent I and John Chrysostom", in *Giovanni Crisostomo: Oriente e Occidente tra IV e V secolo*, xxxiii Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana, Roma 6–8 maggio 2004, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum*

treatment of papal letters in Jasper and Fuhrmann.²⁰ Gregory the Great marks a turning-point in the archiving of papal correspondence, as illustrated by the “register” of over 800 surviving letters attributed to him. Thus the beginning of Gregory’s episcopacy in 590 CE marks the end of our investigation. The western approach to archiving letters can be seen to contrast with that of the Greek-speaking part of the late-antique world, particularly after the turmoil and acrimony caused by the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE).

USING LETTERS AS A SOURCE²¹

The “apparent explosion of epistolary practice” in Late Antiquity has been noted recently;²² together with the fact that “our most substantial evidence for Greek and Latin letter-writing and collection practices is late antique.”²³

93/2 (Rome, 2005), pp. 687–698; idem, “The Date of Innocent I’s *Epistula* 12 and the Second Exile of John Chrysostom”, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 45 (2005), pp. 155–170; idem, “Innocent I and the Attacks on the Bethlehem Monasteries”, *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 2 (2006), pp. 69–83; idem, “Innocent I and Anysius of Thessalonica”, *Byzantion* 77 (2007), pp. 124–148; idem, “Innocent I and the Illyrian Churches on the Question of Heretical Ordination”, *Journal of the Australian Early Medieval Association* 4 (2008), pp. 77–93; idem, “Innocent I and Rufus of Thessalonica”, *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 59 (2009), pp. 51–64; idem, “Innocent I’s Letter to Lawrence: Photinians, Bonosians, and the *Defensores Ecclesiae*”, *JTS* ns 63 (2012), pp. 136–155.

²⁰ D. Jasper, H. Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters in the Early Middle Ages*, History of Medieval Canon Law (Washington, DC, 2001).

²¹ Cf. Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, pp. 44–53, on our methodological approach to episcopal letters. Here we give an abridged version of that chapter, adapted specifically to letters on the theme of crisis management.

²² A. Gillett, “Communication in Late Antiquity: Use and Reuse”, in ed. S.F. Johnson, *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, Oxford Handbooks in Classics and Ancient History (Oxford, 2012), pp. 815–846. M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid. Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Bishop*, Birmingham Byzantine and Ottoman Monographs 2 (Aldershot, Brookfield, VT, 1997), p. 11 n. 3, notes that if fourth- and fifth-century Greek letters were excluded from the tally of Byzantine letters the total number would drop sharply. On late-antique epistolography in general see J. Sykutris, “Epistolographie”, in eds. G. Wissowa, W. Kroll, *RE*, Supplementband 5 (Stuttgart, 1931), pp. 186–220; G. Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Âge Occidental, fasc. 17 (Turnhout, 1976); A.J. Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*, Society of Biblical Literature, Sources for Biblical Study no. 19 (Atlanta, GA, 1988); P. Hatlie, “Redeeming Byzantine Epistolography”, *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 20 (1996), pp. 213–248; M. Zelzer, “Die Briefliteratur. Kommunikation durch Briefe: Ein Gespräch mit Abwesenden”, in eds. L.J. Engels, H. Hofmann, *Neues Handbuch der Literaturwissenschaft* 4, *Spätantike mit einem Panorama der byzantinischen Literatur* (Wiesbaden, 1997), pp. 321–353; C. Poster, L.C. Mitchell, *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction from Antiquity to the Present*, Historical and Bibliographic Studies, Studies in Rhetoric/Communication (Columbia, SC, 2007).

²³ J. Ebbeler, “Tradition, Innovation, and Epistolary *mores*”, in ed. P. Rousseau, *A Com-*

This epistolary activity is all the more surprising given that in the Classical period only eminent and politically active people like Cicero, Seneca and Pliny the younger could afford a private postal service.²⁴ Yet there is no general book on the subject of letter-writing in this period, although a great deal of attention has recently been paid to travel and information-transfer in Late Antiquity,²⁵ and to the role of the bishop in this period, not however as a letter-writer.²⁶ For the carriage of literary letters we still rely largely on the 1925 work of Denys Gorce.²⁷

The form and function of the epistolographical genre in Late Antiquity presents its own problematic, with its many hybrid forms that do not fit the strict Classical definition of a letter. We then turn to the public/private nature of letters, i.e. the question of their audiences. We shall address the question of how far we can trust the relatively small number of letters which have survived to us for an accurate picture of crisis management in late-antique society. The rationale behind letter compilations, when more than accidental, also impinges on their usefulness as a historical source for episcopal crisis management.

panion to Late Antiquity. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Chichester, 2009), pp. 270–284 at p. 271.

²⁴ See S. Mratschek, *Der Briefwechsel des Paulinus von Nola. Kommunikation und soziale Kontakte zwischen christlichen Intellektuellen*, Hypomnemata 134 (Göttingen, 2002), p. 286.

²⁵ See e.g. L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, 1994); S. Mratschek, “Einblicke in einen Postsack. Zur Struktur und Edition der ‘Natalicia’ des Paulinus von Nola”, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 114 (1996), pp. 165–172; L. Di Paola, *Viaggi, trasporti e istituzioni: studi sul cursus publicus*, Pelorias 5 (Messina, 1999); A. Kolb, *Transport und Nachrichtentransfer im Römischen Reich*, *Klio. Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte, Beihefte*, NF 2 (Berlin, 2000); L. Ellis, F.L. Kidner, eds., *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity. Sacred and Profane* (Aldershot, Burlington, VT, 2004); B. Leyerle, “Mobility and the Traces of Empire”, in ed. Rousseau, *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, pp. 110–123; C. Sotinel, “How Were Bishops Informed? Information Transmission across the Adriatic Sea in Late Antiquity”, in eds. Ellis, Kidner, *Travel, Communication and Geography*, pp. 63–71; eadem, “Information and Political Power”, in ed. Rousseau, *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, pp. 125–138, at pp. 125–126.

²⁶ See, for example, R. Lizzi, *Il potere episcopale nell'Oriente romano. Rappresentazione ideologica e realtà politica (IV–V sec. d.C.)*, *Filologia e critica* 53 (Rome, 1987); É. Rebillard, C. Sotinel, eds., *L'Évêque dans la cité du IV^e au VI^e siècle: image et autorité*, Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'Istituto Patristico Augustinianum et l'École française de Rome, 1–2 décembre 1995 (Rome, 1998); A. Sterk, *Renouncing the World yet Leading the Church: The Monk-Bishop in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, MA, 2004); C. Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition*, *Transformation of the Classical Heritage* 37 (Berkeley, 2005); R. Lizzi Testa, “The Late Antique Bishop: Image and Reality”, in ed. Rousseau, *A Companion to Late Antiquity*, pp. 525–538.

²⁷ *Les voyages, l'hospitalité et le port des lettres dans le monde chrétien des IV^e et V^e siècles* (Wépion-sur-Meuse, Paris, 1925), esp. pp. 191–247.

The Nature and Function of Letters

In Classical and Christian antiquity there are almost as many definitions of a letter as there are letter-writers, but the following statements more or less sum up what was presupposed in a letter: it is one half of a dialogue or takes the place of a dialogue; it is a communication with somebody absent as if he or she were present; it is speech written down; it reflects the personality of the letter-writer.

Under this broad umbrella are various types of letters. The two types famously described by Cicero are the private and the public letter, possibly an over-simplification of divisions in the genre. Other epistolary theorists divide letters into as many as 21 types (ps-Demetrius) or 41 types (ps. Libanius).²⁸ This indicates that there was a great flexibility in the deployment of the letter-writing genre and that it could be used at will for purposes of communication, for dissemination of ideas, for polemical ends and for instruction. As a rule of thumb in classifying episcopal letters in this book we have used thirteen categories:

1. Polemical—letters refuting paganism or other religions, especially in this period Judaism.
2. Dogmatic—letters dealing with matters of Christian doctrine.
3. Pastoral—advice on matters of spiritual guidance addressed to non-clergy.
4. Consolation—advice on managing grief, usually occasioned by bereavement or exile.
5. Friendship—letters expressing or strengthen ties with close friends, patrons or clients.
6. Disciplinary—letters enforcing canonical rulings on clergy or monastics.
7. Administrative—letters pertaining to the institutional running of the church, including clerical elections, property management and related financial issues.

²⁸ The classic textbook on ancient epistolary theory remains Malherbe, *Ancient Epistolary Theorists*. See F. Maassen, *Geschichte der Quellen und der Literatur des canonischen Rechts im Abendlande bis zum Ausgange des Mittelalters*, vol. 1 (Graz, 1870); more recently D. Moreau, "Non impar conciliorum extat auctoritas. L'origine de l'introduction des lettres pontificales dans le droit canonique", in eds. J. Desmulliez, C. Hoët-van Cauwenberghe, J.-C. Jolivet, *L'Études des correspondances dans le monde romain de l'Antiquité classique à l'Antiquité tardive: permanences et mutations*, Actes du XXXe Colloque international de Lille, 20–22 novembre 2008 (Villeneuve-d'Ascq, 2010), pp. 487–506.

8. Recommendation—commending a person or family to an existing friend or acquaintance.
9. Advice—answers to questions from bishops, emperors or other persons of influence on various matters, whether doctrinal, administrative or disciplinary.
10. Admonition—instruction on a disciplinary or doctrinal matter, using threats of spiritual punishment for non-compliance.
11. Hortation—similar to an admonition, with an emphasis on spiritual rewards for compliance.
12. Decree—letter to another bishop or bishops in answer to specific disciplinary questions; this sort of letter was later interpreted as having universal application.
13. Judgement—pronouncement of deposition from clerical office and/or excommunication.

Terminology

The bishops themselves used different terms for letter varieties, and some of these documents do not read like letters at all. For example, there is a *libellus*, which could be a document, communication or report, a *relatio* (narration or recital of events), a *suggestio* (points for consideration) and *commonitoria* (reminders, instructions). We return to these hybrid forms below. From the bishops of Rome in particular we have a wide range of words to designate certain letter-types of a canonical status, for example *constitutum*, *epistula decretalis*, or *epistula encyclica*.²⁹ Synodical letters (*epistulae synodicae*) were those disseminated by an incoming bishop to demonstrate where he stood on matters of faith; synodal letters (*epistulae synodales*), on the other hand, communicated the decisions of synods. Particularly in the East we find festival letters (*epistulae festales*), which fall into two categories: the magisterial Paschal letters of the patriarchs of Alexandria, which announced authoritatively and well in advance the dates of the following Lenten Fast, Easter and Pentecost, and the short letters, more like greeting cards, that were exchanged on important feast days between bishops, of which there are many examples from Firmus of Caesarea, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Severus of Antioch, and in the West from Avitus of Vienne. Unique as a letter-form are the *indiculi* or lists of instructions given, together with another letter, by the bishop of Rome to his envoys on their missions to Constantinople:

²⁹ See Moreau, “*Non impar conciliorum extat auctoritas*”, pp. 489–492.

in minute detail the *indiculi* set out rules for the envoys' behaviour on their arrival, even scripting for their guidance some possible conversational scenarios with the emperor and patriarch in the East. While this overview is not an exhaustive examination of the terminology of the letters we are dealing with,³⁰ it will go some way towards illustrating the variety of letter-forms to be found in fifth- and sixth-century Latin and Greek episcopal correspondence.

The Question of Audience: Public or Private?

Letter-writing in antiquity, and even later, needs to be viewed as a kind of "public intimacy",³¹ and letters themselves as "intimate and confidential and intended for publication".³² This view of the letter influenced those who chose it as the medium of the message, when they preferred the epistolographical genre to that of the homily, for example. Why did they make this choice? Cicero's remark that few can carry a letter without lightening the weight by reading it,³³ or Libanius' assertion that "any letter you get is immediately known to people here",³⁴ holds true for Late Antiquity too. Thus while we have both public and private letters from many fifth- and sixth-century bishops, there is sometimes little to choose between the two points.³⁵

³⁰ Jerome, for instance, who was not a bishop, often used the term *commentariola* of his letters when they were shorter than a *libellus* or *volumen*. See the discussion in B. Conring, *Hieronymus als Briefschreiber. Ein Beitrag zur spätantiken Epistolographie*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum/Studies and Texts in Antiquity and Christianity 8 (Tübingen, 2001), pp. 100–105.

³¹ A phrase applied to the Byzantine letter by M. Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, p. 17.

³² A. Morey, C.N.L. Brooke, *Gilbert Foliot and His Letters*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, ns 11 (Cambridge, New York, 1965), p. 13, cited in Mullett, *Theophylact of Ochrid*, p. 16.

³³ Cicero, *Ep.* 13.1 to Atticus: 'quotus enim quisque est qui epistulam paulo graviorem ferre possit nisi eam per lectione relevavit?'; ed., trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero. Letters to Atticus*, Loeb Classical Library 7 (London, UK, Cambridge, MA, 1999; repr. 2006), vol. 1, p. 60.

³⁴ Libanius, *Ep.* 16; ed., trans. A.F. Norman, *Libanius. Autobiography and Selected Letters*, Loeb Classical Library 478 (London, UK, Cambridge, MA, 1992), vol. 1, p. 401.

³⁵ As pointed out by É. Paoli-Lafaye, "Messagers et messages. La diffusion des nouvelles de l'Afrique d'Augustin vers les régions d'au-delà des mers", in eds. J. Andreau, C. Virlouvet, *L'Information et la mer dans le monde antique* (Rome, 2002), pp. 233–259, at p. 235. On the official, public, missions of papal envoys see A. Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West*, 411–533 (Cambridge, 2003), esp. 227–258. For a taxonomy of fifth- and sixth-century sources see P. Allen, "How to Study Episcopal Letter-Writing in Late Antiquity: An Overview of Published Work on the Fifth and Sixth Centuries", in eds. V. Baranov, B. Lourié, K. Demura, *Scrinium. Revue de patrologie, d'hagiographie critique et d'histoire ecclésiastique* 6 (Piscataway, 2010), pp. 130–142.

Let us examine first the public nature of the letter in Late Antiquity, exemplified by two extant letters, one by Bishop Gregory of Nyssa and the other by the pagan orator Libanius. Gregory speaks of friends who regard a circulated letter addressed to an individual as a particular treasure: some had it read numerous times and memorised it; others had put it on their writing-tablets.³⁶ A letter of Libanius to Basil, registered as *Letter* 338 in Basil's letter-collection, describes the arrival of Basil's letter to the pagan orator. Several official men were sitting with Libanius when the bearers delivered Basil's letter to him. Libanius read the piece through in silence, then exclaimed aloud, as a consequence of which the others wanted to have it read to them. The reader read it aloud and went out, probably to show it to others too, and only reluctantly gave it back.³⁷ Here apparently the reader is not one of the bearers, and the letter is regarded as public property.

In one letter Synesius of Cyrene, writing to his friend Pylamenes, explains that he has hired a theatre to have a public reading of Pylamenes' letter,³⁸ and refers to letters being read out in the Panhellenion in Constantinople.³⁹ In another letter, written to his brother in Alexandria, Synesius assumes that his work will be read aloud before the patriarch of that city and his staff.⁴⁰ Small wonder, then, that Synesius says he cannot believe it is a good thing to confide secrets to paper, because the function of a letter

³⁶ Gregory of Nyssa, *Ep.* 14.3–4 to Libanius; ed. P. Maraval, *Grégoire de Nysse. Lettres, introduction, texte critique, traduction, notes et index*, SC 363 (Paris, 1990), pp. 202, 15–204, 25. Trans. A.M. Silvas, *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters*, Supplements to VC 83 (Leiden, 2007) p. 157: Οὕτω γὰρ συνέβη κατὰ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην ἐπιφοιτήσαντά με τῇ μητροπόλει τῶν Καππαδοκῶν ἐντυχεῖν τινι τῶν ἐπιτηδείων, ὅς μοι τὸ δῶρον τοῦτο, τὴν ἐπιστολήν, οἷόν τι σύμβολον ἐορτῆς προεστεινато. Ἐγὼ δὲ περιχαρὴς τῇ συντυχίᾳ γενόμενος κοινὸν προὔθηκα τοῖς παροῦσι τὸ κέρδος, καὶ πάντες μετείχον τὸ ὅλον ἕκαστος ἔχειν φίλωνεϊκούντες, καὶ οὐκ ἡλαττούμην ἐγὼ· διεξιούσα γὰρ τὰς πάντων χεῖρας ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἴδιος ἐκάστου πλοῦτος ἐγίνετο, τῶν μὲν τῇ μνήμῃ διὰ τῆς συνεχοῦς ἀναγνώσεως τῶν δὲ δέλτοις ἐναπομαξαμένων τὰ ῥήματα, καὶ πάλιν ἐν ταῖς ἐμαῖς ἦν χερσὶ "For it so happened that on that day, as I was visiting the metropolis of the Cappadocians, I met one of my acquaintances who handed me this gift, your letter, as a feast-day present. I was overjoyed at this good fortune, threw open my gain to all who were present. All shared in it, each eagerly acquiring the whole of it, while I was none the worse off. For the letter, as it passed through the hands of all became the private wealth of each, some by memorizing the words through repeated reading, others by taking a copy of them upon tablets. So it returned to my hands ...".

³⁷ Ed. Y. Courtonne, *Saint Basile. Correspondance* (Paris, 2003), vol. 3, pp. 205–206.

³⁸ *Ep.* 101; ed. Garzya, trans. Roques, *Synésios de Cyrène. Correspondance* (Paris, 2000), vol. 2, p. 224.

³⁹ *Ep.* 101; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 227.

⁴⁰ *Ep.* 105; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 238.

is not to keep quiet but to speak to the first comer.⁴¹ To another one of his friends, Diogenes, Synesius writes that the addressee has the gift of not only communicating daily affairs by letter but also of having his letters known and admired.⁴² The wide dissemination of letters could also act as a guarantee of *parrhesia*, as Severus of Antioch points out: “How can it not be right that we should also proclaim openly in words the things that we in actual practice think and do?”⁴³ The near hopelessness of keeping correspondence private is mentioned by Augustine as he laments that his writings cannot be kept from those whose minds are not too trained or sharp, who therefore could misconstrue them.⁴⁴ If we are to believe Libanius, there were even those (like himself) who took advantage of the public nature of letters:

Well, even if you do not write to me, I feast on your letters, for whenever I find out that anyone has received one, I present myself forthwith, and either by persuasion or by overpowering his reluctance I get to read it.⁴⁵

It follows that lack of confidentiality was a constant concern for the episcopal letter-writers and other correspondents, and that consequently it was standard for verbal reports to be delivered by the bearers.⁴⁶ Witness the late-antique pagan writer Symmachus (370–384 CE), whose letters contained no real information; that was to be conveyed by the bearer. The letters of Leo I of Rome are similar in their confidentiality: whenever there was a tricky ecclesiastical issue at stake, the essence of it was left to the trusted bearer to explain.⁴⁷

⁴¹ *Ep.* 137 to Herculian; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 277. Cf. C. Tornau, *Zwischen Rhetorik und Philosophie: Augustins Argumentationstechnik in De Civitate Dei und ihr bildungsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund* (Berlin, 2006), p. 35, on the absence of copyright or confidentiality in Late Antiquity. On the public reading of letters see too Constable, *Letters and Letter-Collections*, pp. 11–12; M.B. Trapp, *Greek and Latin Letters. An Anthology, with Translation*, Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics (Cambridge, New York, 2003), p. 17.

⁴² *Ep.* 23; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 1, p. 30.

⁴³ *Ep.* 1.55; ed., trans. E.W. Brooks, *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. 2 (Oxford, London, 1903; repr. Westmead, Hants, 1969), pp. 166–167. *Ep.* 29 of the emperor Julian contains similar sentiments.

⁴⁴ *Ep.* 162.1; NBA 22, p. 670; trans. Teske, vol. 3, p. 56.

⁴⁵ *Ep.* 86; ed., trans. Norman, vol. 2, p. 109.

⁴⁶ See further P. Allen, “Christian Correspondences: The Secrets of Letter-writers and Letter-bearers”, in eds. H. Baltussen, P. Davis, *Parrhesia, Censorship, and the Art of Veiled Speech* (Leiden, forthcoming).

⁴⁷ See e.g. *Ep.* 67 (ed. C. Silva-Tarouca, TDST 15 (Rome, 1934), p. 89); *Ep.* 80 (ed. ACO 2/4, pp. 38–40 and ed. Silva-Tarouca, TDST 15, nr. 24); *Ep.* 85 (ed. ACO 2/4, pp. 44–45 and ed. Silva-Tarouca, TDST 15, nr. 28).

While the majority of episcopal letters were addressed to male readers, there are a number of surviving letters to women. One of the most common types of letter to find a female addressee was the consolation letter (*consolatio*), as for instance Fulgentius of Ruspe's *Letter* 2 to the widow Galla on the death of her husband.⁴⁸ Simple friendship letters, not related to crises, abound, such as Ruricius of Limoges' letter to Ceraunia.⁴⁹ Bishops frequently exchanged letters with women with whom they seemed to be in patron-client relationships, as for example three letters to Pope Hormisdas, one from Anastasia (*Ep.* 70), and two from Juliana Anicia (*Epp.* 71 and 119). Our corpus includes several petitions to female members of the imperial family, such as Gelasius of Rome's letters to Hereleuva, mother of the Gothic king Theodoric,⁵⁰ and Leo I's petitions to Theodosius II's sister Pulcheria (*Epp.* 30, 31, 45, 60, 70, 79, 84, 95, 105, 112 and 116), Theodosius' widow Eudocia (*Ep.* 123), her daughter Licinia Eudoxia (*Ep.* 64), and Valentinian III's mother and regent, Galla Placidia (*Ep.* 63).

Hybrid Forms

One must not overlook those hybrid texts which are letters in the technical sense but in terms of their nature, content and function have in fact crossed over into the realm of homilies or treatises. Although according to the rules of ancient epistolography the letter was theoretically limited in length and was also supposedly confined to one subject, in practice the genre was flexible,⁵¹ and the cross-over from letter to treatise, for example, was a relatively easy one. Among the letter-collections surviving to us from the fifth and sixth centuries we have huge variations in length, with some communications from Innocent I, Synesius of Cyrene and Theodoret of Cyrrhus, for example, containing only a few lines, whereas others, among which are Leo I's *Tome* (*Ep.* 28) and *Second Tome* (*Ep.* 165, containing about

⁴⁸ Fulgentius, *Ep.* 2; ed. J. Fraipont, *Sancti Fulgentii episcopi Ruspensis Opera*, CCSL 91 (Turnhout, 1968), vol. 1, pp. 197–211.

⁴⁹ Ruricius, *Ep.* 2.15 to Ceraunia; ed. B. Krusch, *Fausti aliorumque epistulae ad Ruricium aliosque*, MGH AA 8 (Berlin, 1887), pp. 323–326 (c. 495/500).

⁵⁰ Gelasius, *Frg.* 36; ed. Thiel, p. 502; *Ep.* 46, ed. P. Ewald, "Die Papstbriefe der Britischen Sammlung", *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellschriften Deutscher Geschichte des Mittelalters* 5 (1880), pp. 503–596, at pp. 521–522.

⁵¹ Basil of Caesarea, for example, wrote to his correspondent Philagrius: Πολλάς γε οὖν πέμπε τὰς ἐπιστολάς καὶ μακρὰς ὡς ἐνὶ μάλιστα· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἀρετὴ ἐπιστολῆς ἢ βραχύτης, οὐ μᾶλλον γε ἢ ἀνθρώπου. "... send plenty of letters, as long as you can [make them], for shortness is not a virtue in a letter, any more than it is in a man." *Ep.* 323; ed. Courtonne, vol. 3, p. 195, 12–14.

twelve pages of text and thirteen pages of *testimonia*), are the length of a tractate. Here we take as examples two long letters of Augustine, *Letters* 140 and 157: were these pieces originally letters which subsequently and innocently exceeded the epistolary norm, or were they intentionally written in letter-form with some ulterior motive?⁵²

Augustine's *Letter* 140 was written in 411 or 412 in reply to Honoratus, a Carthaginian catechumen, who had quizzed Augustine on five questions about scriptural passages. In his reply Augustine adds a sixth question of his own and his answer to it, making the letter well over 40 pages. In his *Retractationes* the bishop referred to this work as a *liber*, explaining that he had not answered Honoratus' questions in order but in a way that enabled him to discuss the grace of the New Testament, for he was still struggling with the Donatists and had begun his opposition to the Pelagians' ideas.⁵³ In other words, Augustine has turned his reply to Honoratus into a tractate of his own choosing, adding a sixth component in order to tie the other five together. In 414 or 415 the Silician layman Hilary posed several questions about Pelagianism to Augustine in a half-page letter.⁵⁴ Augustine's reply was 27 pages long, and perhaps was the work he described in *De gestis Pelagii* as a "book".⁵⁵ His focus is theological and exegetical rather than pastoral or personal, and it is difficult to believe that Hilary—who we may imagine was surprised by the length of the response he received—was not meant to show it, read it, or have it read to Christians in Sicily who were troubled by Pelagian doctrine.

On the basis of these two compositions it is easy to understand why Johannes Divjak branded such "lettres-traités" as "fausses lettres", while affirming that the criterion for what is and is not a letter for Augustine appears in other cases to be fulfilled by the formula *quis ad quem scribat*.⁵⁶ Recently Pierre Descotes has pointed out that we should distrust any approach that emphasises the theological content of a letter to the extent that we forget to consider what the meaning of the letter is, namely the rapport of the letter-writer with the recipient. He singles out the letter to

⁵² For a more extensive treatment of these two letters see P. Allen in Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, pp. 51–52.

⁵³ *Retractationes* 2.36; NBA 2, p. 206.

⁵⁴ *Ep.* 156; NBA 22, p. 580.

⁵⁵ *Ep.* 157; NBA 22, pp. 582–637. Cf. *De gestis Pelagii* 11.23; NBA 17/2, p. 58.

⁵⁶ J. Divjak, "Zur Struktur Augustinischer Briefcorpora", in *Les lettres de saint Augustin découvertes par Johannes Divjak. Communications présentées au colloque des 20 et 21 septembre 1982*, Études augustiniennes (Paris, 1983), pp. 13–27 at p. 21.

Honoratus as an instance where Augustine has made a great effort to take account of the personality of his epistolary interlocutor.⁵⁷

Another example of formal letters which were much closer in tone and function to homilies is provided by the documents sent out annually by the patriarchs of Alexandria announcing the dates of Lent, Easter and Pentecost. These paschal or festal “letters” were disseminated throughout Egypt to churches and monasteries, and indeed to the church at large, and were read out presumably in a liturgical context. The most significant surviving corpora of these letters are those of Athanasius, Theophilus and Cyril of Alexandria.⁵⁸

Libelli must also be included as anomalous letters. These were brief tracts that outlined a doctrinal position, delivered by legates from one bishop to another, or to a council, or emperor. An example is the *libellus* of Felix III, bishop of Rome, sent to the emperor Zeno at the outbreak of the Acacian schism.⁵⁹

The *commonitorium* is a similar document, produced by one bishop/patriarch for a council or another bishop/patriarch. Examples are Cyril of Alexandria’s *Commonitorium* addressed to Celestine of Rome which he gave to the deacon Posidonius when he sent him to Rome to deal with the trouble of Nestorius;⁶⁰ and the *Commonitorium* of Celestine I to bishops and priests going to the synod of Ephesus.⁶¹

Compilation of Letter-Collections

The rationale behind most compilations of letters from Classical and Christian antiquity is a mystery.⁶² Even from an assiduous filing system, that of Augustine of Hippo, for example, we have only about 300 letters surviving, doubtless only a fraction of what he actually wrote. This makes pronouncements in his letters on any given topic—including crises—hazardous. Here

⁵⁷ P. Descotes, “Les lettres-traités d’Augustin et la controverse Pélagienne”, in eds. Desmulliez, Hoët-van Cauwenberghe, Jolivet, *L’étude des correspondances*, pp. 429–447, esp. pp. 438–445.

⁵⁸ On the genre in general see P. Éviex (intro.), *Cyrille d’Alexandrie. Lettres Festales I–VI*, SC 372, pp. 73–118.

⁵⁹ Felix III of Rome, *Ep.* 4; ed. Thiel, pp. 240–241.

⁶⁰ Cyril’s *Commonitorium* = Celestine of Rome, *Ep.* 9; it was written in Greek with a Latin translation.

⁶¹ Celestine of Rome, *Ep.* 17; PL 50, 503A–B.

⁶² On the continuities between rationales of Latin letter-collections from Classical and Christian Rome, see R. Gibson, “On the Nature of Ancient Letter Collections”, *Journal of Roman Studies* 102 (2012), pp. 56–78.

we wish to examine the epistolary output of several late-antique bishops, both individually and collectively, in an attempt to establish some guidelines for assessing compilation and survival techniques.

Concilia *acta* were an important vehicle for the transmission of episcopal letters. Many letters of, for example, Cyril of Alexandria, John of Antioch and Theodoret of Cyrrhus are preserved from the Council of Ephesus. On the other hand, from Bishop Epiphanius of Pavia (438–496), who played a crucial role as envoy in negotiations with Germanic kings,⁶³ we have no letters transmitted in any way at all, although it is unthinkable that this influential bishop wrote none. Different again is the case of Epiphanius' successor, Ennodius, in his turn a diplomat with several missions to Constantinople and elsewhere to his credit, all of whose letters date from *before* his episcopate.⁶⁴ Again it is unthinkable that he wrote no letters as bishop. Finally we adduce a remarkable sixth-century dossier of bishops' letters, intentionally compiled and surviving in Syriac, that was intended to justify the actions of the controversial patriarch of Antioch, Paul the Black, the catalyst for the schism between Antioch and Alexandria in 575 CE that lasted until well into the seventh century.⁶⁵

Another *caveat* when dealing with letter-collections is provided by the surviving letters of Severus, patriarch of Antioch from 512 to 518.⁶⁶ For the most part these have come down to us in early Syriac translations in several groups. Originally they were divided into three classes: those written before his patriarchate, those during it, and those after his expulsion from his see in 518 until his death in Egypt in 538. The three classes contained four, ten and nine books respectively. In addition, there were letters outside these 23 books.⁶⁷ The total number of letters must have exceeded 3759, of which fewer than 300 survive, thus less than one-fifteenth of the total. The sixth book of the 23, containing 123 letters translated by the priest Athanasius of Nisibis in 669, deals solely with ecclesiastical and canonical matters and is not in chronological order. Here the translator's interest in ecclesiastical discipline

⁶³ *Vita Epiphani*; ed. F. Vogel, MGH AA 7, pp. 84–109; trans. R.J. Deferrari, *Early Christian Biographies*, FOTC 15 (Washington, DC, 1952), pp. 301–351.

⁶⁴ See S. Gioanni, *Ennode de Pavie. Lettres*, Collection des Universités de France 383 (Paris, 2006), vol. 1, pp. VII–XCV, on the career of Ennodius.

⁶⁵ *DM*; cf. A. Van Roey, P. Allen, eds., trans. comm., *Monophysite Texts of the Sixth Century*, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 56 (Leuven, 1994), pp. 265–303.

⁶⁶ See further P. Allen, "Severus of Antioch and Pastoral Care", in eds. P. Allen, W. Mayer, L. Cross, *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, vol. 2 (Brisbane, 1999), pp. 387–400, at pp. 388–391.

⁶⁷ See Brooks, ed., trans., *Select Letters*, esp. vol. 2, pp. ix–x on the calculations.

determined what he passed on. Similar concerns governed the collection of Roman episcopal letters. For example, from Pope Hormisdas (514–523), we have a “collection” of 93 letters, as well as 31 addressed to him and 26 which are neither written by nor addressed to him.⁶⁸ This corpus owes its contents and survival to the archiving techniques of the papal *scrinium* which here are well in evidence before the episcopate of Gregory the Great.

Another important consideration is the bias of stylized letter-collections, like those of Sidonius Apollinaris. The intentional collections of Seneca and Pliny the Great illustrate such selectivity in action.⁶⁹ None of the Greek and Latin letters examined in this volume gives us a full and accurate picture of episcopal crisis management in Late Antiquity. The rationale—if that is the word—behind the compilation of the letter-collections is largely to blame for this, rather than the theoretical constraints of the epistolary genre, which, as we have seen, could be ignored at will. It is noteworthy that Augustine and Salvian, among others, chose the letter-form for moral disquisitions which on the one hand resemble a homily, and on the other a tractate, confirming the fact that, however much the epistolographical genre was manipulated, the letter remained an act of “public intimacy”.

Notwithstanding the regrettably high mortality rate of letters generally in early Christianity, it is estimated that about one-third of surviving episcopal letters deal with one or more of the categories of crisis identified above. Some bishops, for example Paulinus of Nola and Ephrem of Antioch, have nothing to say on the subject in spite of the crises unfolding around them, an interesting fact in itself. There are also several documented crises where there was no evidence of episcopal management in the bishops’ letters themselves. By comparing episcopal letters with homilies, as well as with histories, chronicles, archeological findings and saints’ *Lives*, we can assess whether letters are slanted towards particular kinds of representation of crises. In this respect we see substantial regional variation between three groups: Roman bishops, other western bishops, and Greek-speaking bishops.

⁶⁸ Ed. Thiel, pp. 741–990.

⁶⁹ On Sidonius’ collection and the involvement of Constantius of Lyons in its redaction, see the profile in the Appendix to this volume; on Pliny the Younger, see R. Gibson, R. Morello, *Reading the Letters of Pliny the Younger* (Cambridge, 2012).

EPISTOLARY SOURCES ON CRISIS

The Greek Corpus

The Greek collections from this period consist of over 1000 letters from Greek-speaking bishops. Many of these have survived in conciliar *acta*, in Latin, Syriac and other translations, and in fragmentary form. From this incomplete evidence, it appears that the overriding concerns of Greek-speaking bishops were the reception of the Council of Ephesus and the crisis precipitated by the Council of Chalcedon and its aftermath, as is demonstrated by the number of letters of Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret and John of Antioch transmitted in conciliar collections and therefore predominantly reflecting doctrinal matters.⁷⁰ Letters in smaller quantities of lesser-known bishops like Andreas of Samosata, Alexander of Hierapolis, Helladius of Tarsus, Maximianus of Anazarbus and Meletius of Mopsuestia likewise owe their preservation to *acta*.⁷¹ To be expected was that the letters of the condemned Nestorius would survive only in excerpts,⁷² and that those of anti-Chalcedonians like Timothy Aelurus (d. 477) and the outlawed Severus of Antioch survive almost totally in Syriac translations.⁷³ From the dynamic Ephrem, successively *comes Orientis* and patriarch of Antioch for eighteen years (526–544), we have not a single surviving letter documenting the tumultuous times in which he lived, which witnessed earthquakes, Persian incursions and the plague.⁷⁴ Similarly from the prominent Chalcedonian bishops Anastasius I of Antioch (558–570, 593–599), Gregory of Antioch (570–593) and Eulogius of Alexandria (580–608) little or nothing survives. The 49 letters of Firmus, bishop of Caesarea (d. before 439), that have come down to us display more interest in friendship and gentlemanly pursuits than engagement with crisis. Only thirteen letters, almost exclusively devoted to doctrinal issues, provide evidence of the enormous influence exercised by the anti-Chalcedonian leader, Theodosius (535–566), during a critical period of the anti-Chalcedonian church, and the epistolary remains of other prominent anti-Chalcedonians like Damian of Alexandria (578–604) and Peter of Callinicum/Antioch (581–591) are paltry. Were it not for the impressive dossier (the *DM*) compiled in c. 581 by a supporter of Paul the

⁷⁰ See Appendix under Greek authors.

⁷¹ See Appendix under Greek authors.

⁷² See Appendix under Greek author profiles, and Chapter 3, Case-study 1.

⁷³ See Appendix under Greek author profiles, and Chapter 3, Case-study 5.

⁷⁴ On which see Chapter 4.

Black, the controversial patriarch of Antioch (564–581),⁷⁵ we would be even less informed about the crisis management strategies of anti-Chalcedonian bishops in the East from the 550s onwards.

The four significant Greek-language *corpora* of letters we have dealt with so far in this volume are those of Cyril, Synesius, Theodoret, and Severus (the latter surviving in Syriac translations). Cyril's management style in dealing with crises caused by crop failure and gang violence in the Egyptian countryside is revealed in two of his widely-disseminated *Festal Letters*⁷⁶ and, like that of his uncle Theophilus, is consistent with the monolithic power wielded by the patriarchs of Alexandria in dealing also with Jews, Novatians, anthropomorphites and phantasiasts. Synesius, on the other hand, exhibits a hands-on approach in managing crisis, defending his city physically against barbarian incursions and personally taking charge of a situation involving a rapacious and corrupt governor of his province.⁷⁷ But then Synesius was as much *curialis* as he was bishop. For his part, Theodoret, affected by ecclesiastical crisis himself during his episcopate and relegated to his see, intervenes energetically with local and imperial officials on behalf of tenant farmers who are unable to pay their taxes because of repeated crop failure.⁷⁸ He also addresses the critical situations of Christians who have fled Vandal North Africa by writing numerous letters of recommendation on their behalf to other bishops, secular officials and a sophist.⁷⁹ The crises confronted by Severus are different again, at least as far as the bias of the compilers and translators of his letter-collections allows us to see: while he is still patriarch he is preoccupied with the Chalcedonian crisis to the extent that he establishes rules for accepting defectors from the anti-Chalcedonian cause;⁸⁰ during his long exile in Egypt his concern is to manage *in absentia* the large diaspora of his co-religionaries, banished by the imperial government to far-flung places.⁸¹

⁷⁵ See Chapter 5 and Case-study 2.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 4, Case-study 1.

⁷⁷ See Chapter 6, Case-study 1.

⁷⁸ See Chapter 4, Case-study 2.

⁷⁹ *Epp.* 22, 23, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 52, 53, 70.

⁸⁰ This is the case with many letters published by Brooks in *Select Letters*, especially Book 5.

⁸¹ See e.g. *Epp.* 35 and 61; ed. Brooks, PO 12/2, pp. 279–290 and 340–342.

*The Latin Corpus**Letters from Rome*

The Roman *corpus* consists of 630 surviving letters or fragments of letters composed by 20 bishops of Rome. The vast majority of these survive in medieval collections of conciliar canons and papal decretals. These stem mostly from Italy, Gaul and Spain. Conservation of papal letters in such collections began with Siricius (384–399), followed by Innocent I. From the pontificate of Innocent to that of Gregory the Great, all but four bishops of Rome have passed down at least one letter. The most substantial collections belong to Innocent, Leo, Gelasius and Hormisdas. No letters survive from the brief pontificates of John I (523–526) or Silverius (elected in June 536 and abdicated in November of that year).⁸² Boniface II (530–532) produced only one surviving letter. Naturally none survives from Boniface's rival, Dioscorus, who held favour among the majority and lasted only 28 days until his death on 14 October 530. No letters survive from either John III (561–574) or Benedict I (575–579).

Due to the nature of the canon law collections and the rationale behind their compilation, that of providing authorities on questions of clerical discipline and doctrinal error, the content of the letters that survive is remarkably homogeneous. This, together with a preference for letters addressed to important figures such as members of the imperial family, and other well-known figures like Augustine and Jerome, has meant that such collections are good sources on particular crises—especially religious controversy and associated violence—but poor on others. A rare example of a letter that survives outside the mediaeval collections is a fragment of the Arabic translation of Innocent's letter to Severian of Gabala, on doctrinal themes relating to christology and mariology.⁸³ There must have been numerous personal letters that were excluded from these dedicated letter-collections by the narrow purview of the compilers. It is most regrettable that none of these have survived, as they would have helped to round out our picture of Roman episcopal activities beyond their canonical pursuits.

On the basis of the epistolary evidence we conjecture that a major shift occurred at the end of the fifth century in the production, function and preservation of papal letters. The picture of preservation practices is warped

⁸² Those letters attributed to John I in PL 63, 529–534 have been proven to be forgeries: cf. J. Pitra, *Analecta nouissima* (Paris, 1885), vol. 1, p. 466 (CPL 1685).

⁸³ (Jaffé 319); ed. A. Mai, *Spicilegium Romanum* (Rome, 1840), vol. 3, pp. 702–704 (CPL 1643); a Latin retroversion by Mai.

by the fact that virtually none of the archives of the fifth and sixth centuries survives, even though there is repeated reference to them throughout extant papal correspondence. So the contents have to be reconstructed from copies kept by recipients, sometimes fragmentary, and from special collections which were made from the sixth century onwards. Fortunately this means that we have four substantial corpora before the *Registrum* of Gregory the Great: Leo I, Gelasius, Hormisdas and Pelagius I. The whole Roman epistolary corpus up to 492 CE contains only one letter of personal recommendation, that of Felix III for a *vir clarissimus*.⁸⁴ The change to a different epistolary model, or at least to preservation practices, starts with Gelasius and is also evident in the collected letters of Hormisdas and Pelagius I, all of whom regularly supply letters of recommendation for individuals (Gelasius, *Ep.* 13 to Rusticus of Lyon; Hormisdas, *Epp.* 36 and 37 on behalf of John of Nicopolis; Pelagius I, *Ep.* 40 on behalf of Andreas and Joanna).⁸⁵ Due to the medieval redactors' desire for papal letter-collections that would provide precedents for canon law, it is possible that such personal letters of other popes were not deemed worthy of note and thus not preserved. It is probably no coincidence that from the end of the fifth century that we also find an increasing aristocratization of the papacy from Felix III onwards. The shift in redaction practices was completed by the start of Gregory I's pontificate in 590. Gregory's many letters show him acting as an elite patron and petitioning for individuals in need. This evidence has made it seem like a sudden change in papal objectives had occurred, and has led many to call Gregory the first medieval pope, as if late antiquity had ended suddenly with his predecessor Pelagius II. Rather, when we consider the letters of Gelasius and Pelagius, a pattern of continuity emerges of popes increasingly engaged in activities relating to crises other than religious controversy. In relation to the Roman popes we suggest two reasons: the increasing need for bishops to step in as other structures of dependence broke down, and the *paterfamilias*/über-patron mentality that had always obtained to the episcopate of Rome. This was a different kind of behaviour induced by crisis. We

⁸⁴ Felix III, *Ep.* 5 to Emperor Zeno; ed. Thiel, p. 242, recommending Terrentianus, whom he employed as a letter-bearer to Zeno during the Acacian schism (483 CE).

⁸⁵ Gassó and Battle, p. 113, n. 1, suggest that these two might be slaves, since no title is afforded them, and their complain concerns an unjust investigation concerning their status ('quia de statu suo sibi moueri iniustam queruntur quaestionem'). The bishops Amabilis and Leontius are asked to offer them the church's protection. It seems more likely that these are freeborn former captives or refugees who have no documentation to prove their citizenship.

cannot ascribe such behaviour to an ideological shift in relation to the poor. Evidence for this is to be found in their disproportionate concern with the formerly wealthy.⁸⁶

Displaced persons, the subject of our next chapter, do not seem to have attracted much papal interest, unless those persons were runaway slaves, *originarii* or *coloni*. The bishops of Rome remained aloof, to judge by their letters, even if they did spend precious resources on ransoming captives as their position required (as we know for example of Leo I and Symmachus, even though neither mentioned the fact in their many letters). Again, we return to the problem of evidence. When their letters are preserved in canon law collections, it is natural that most are concerned with issues of clerical discipline and canon law: e.g. the baptism of returned captives in Leo's letters to Neo of Ravenna (*Ep.* 166) and Rusticus of Narbonne (*Ep.* 167, questions 16–19).

As is the case in the Greek *corpora*, the absence of comment in relation to natural disasters is most striking. The Romans seem to have lagged behind the rest of the West in ascribing spiritual significance to floods, hail storms, droughts, plagues and other natural phenomena that put human beings in crisis.

Overall we find a distinct reticence about the dire straits in which the papacy found itself in the context of the barbarian invasions of 408–410, a passing reference in Innocent's *Letter* 16 being the only exception. To judge from the content of his sixteen surviving letters Celestine was apparently more concerned with Pelagianism in Italy than with the Arian Vandal invasions of North Africa from 429, which led to the persecution of catholic Christians there.⁸⁷ Local concerns always came first. However, epistolary allusions to the direct threat to Rome from Huns and Vandals in the 430s until the 450s are infrequent, indicating that some local concerns were not suitable material for epistolary communication. They are especially reticent

⁸⁶ Similarly, many of Gregory I's beneficiaries of bequests of money, food, grain and oil were impoverished elites, or their widows and children. He also petitioned on behalf of Sardinian landowners who were unable to bear the increasing burden of imperial taxes. See Neil, "The Papacy in the Age of Gregory the Great", forthcoming.

⁸⁷ A caution against this interpretation, however, is Nestorius' remark in his second letter of three to the pope (Nestorius, *Ep. II ad Celestinum* [CPG 5667] = Celestine, *Ep.* 7), that we have "often written to you" about Julian, Orontius and others of the Pelagian sect who were usurping episcopal office, when his other letters do not mention this issue; cf. Nestorius, *Ep. I ad Celestinum* (CPG 5665) = Celestine, *Ep.* 6, where Nestorius condemns anyone who calls the Virgin "Theotokos"; Nestorius, *Ep. III ad Celestinum* (CPG 5670) = Celestine, *Ep.* 15, on the use of the terms *Theotokos*, *Christotokos* by Cyril. Obviously most of the correspondence between them does not survive.

about their own activities in managing the many crises that these attacks generated, and perhaps most unwilling of all to concede that they had temporarily lost power over Rome itself in 455. The Gothic kings enter without any special remark in the correspondence of Gelasius. The Gothic wars of the mid-sixth century made a brief appearance in Pelagius I's correspondence but, in seeking help from both Goths and Byzantines, he was careful not to ascribe blame to either of the warring parties.⁸⁸ Pelagius I shows the culmination of a tendency towards micro-management that characterizes the Roman bishops of our period. What really upsets all the Roman bishops of this period is heresy, whether Arians in North Africa or to a lesser extent in Gaul (Gelasius), Manichees (Leo I, Gelasius, Hormisdas), Pelagians or Priscillianists in Italy, Spain and Gaul (Celestine, Leo I), or Nestorians and other anti-Chalcedonians in the East, especially during the Acacian schism (Felix III, Gelasius, Anastasius II, Symmachus, Hormisdas).⁸⁹ This leads us to qualify Noble's assertion, in connection with Gelasius' correspondence over the Acacian schism, that, "The routine business of papal government, and the duties of the pope as an Italian metropolitan always took precedence over everything else, even if the narrative sources are crisis oriented and seem to focus on the great events of late antique history."⁹⁰ When we take the tract-length letters of Gelasius into account, and the two lost tracts on Arianism, heresy was clearly his priority, as it was for all other bishops of Rome in this troubled period.

Letters from Other Western Bishops

Occupying a middle position between the extensive epistolary remains of the bishops of Rome and the sporadic transmission of letters from the Greek-speaking parts of the empire in Late Antiquity are the letters of bishops of North Africa, Spain, Gaul and other parts of Italy. While this group is by no means a homogenous whole, several important *corpora* from various locations—those of Augustine, Sidonius Apollinaris, Ruricius of Limoges and Avitus of Vienne—provide us with insights into the crises bishops faced and attempted to grapple with. Nonetheless, it is disappointing that of the 51 letters of Paulinus of Nola and the 297 in the collection of Ennodius of Pavia, men intimately involved in the events of their time, very few date from their episcopates.

⁸⁸ *Epp.* 4 and 9. See Case-study 2 in Chapter 7.

⁸⁹ See Case-study 1 on the *CEn* in Chapter 5.

⁹⁰ Noble, "Theodoric and the Papacy", p. 398.

Because of the numbers in which they survive, the letters of Augustine (c. 300 items) and Sidonius (146) are the most instructive for assessing strategies of episcopal crisis management. In particular, those of Augustine cover a gamut of concerns, from large to small, but we do not find here to the same extent the micro-managing evident in letters of the bishops of Rome. The huge crises for him are firstly the schism between catholics and Donatists, with which he and his people lived daily. Hence we find him writing to a group of Donatist leaders appealing for unity (*Ep.* 43), planning to discuss the schism privately with the Donatist bishop Honoratus, away from the crowds (*Ep.* 49), and inviting Crispinus, the Donatist bishop of Calama, to address the schism by letter (*Ep.* 51). Augustine pleads with Donatus, the proconsul of Africa, to correct Donatists but not put them to death (*Ep.* 100), and elsewhere advocates not punishing Donatist clerics and Circumcellions in accord with their crimes (*Epp.* 133, 134, 139). Subsequently Augustine confronted the threat which he considered Pelagianism posed to church doctrine and unity (*Epp.* 178, 179, 191, 194). His concerns regarding Donatists and Pelagians are attested not only in his letters but also in many of his dogmatic works, and he continued to be much exercised by Arianism (*Epp.* 185, 238, 239, 241). Other crises were constituted by riots between pagans and Christians (*Epp.* 50, 91, 97) and by imminent attacks from Vandals, which Augustine tried to address in his correspondence to the *comes Africae* (*Ep.* 220). A subterranean issue throughout his letters is the clerical abuse of power, which on occasions bubbled to the surface in a troubling way, as in the infamous case of Bishop Antoninus of Fussala which was finally referred to Rome.⁹¹ We have already noted the exertions of the bishop of Hippo in the legal sphere, where he tried to correct social and legal abuses both through his episcopal court and other less formal avenues. Outstanding in this regard is his rescue of over one hundred free North African citizens enslaved by Galatian people-traffickers, in the absence of activity from the civil authorities (*Ep.* 10*). Augustine's reactions on the one hand to the decline of the social classes due to a lack of officials to protect them from excessive taxes (*Ep.* 22*), and on the other to the disturbing development of the indentured labour of free-born children (*Ep.* 24*) demonstrate his social engagement in combating various kinds of breakdowns in his world, but do not provide us with answers regarding his management of specific crises. Apart from the letters of Fulgentius of Ruspe, which reveal him writing against Arianism,

⁹¹ See Chapter 7, Case-study 1.

semi-Pelagianism and apthartodocetism,⁹² we have only very few epistolary remains from other North African bishops writing in Latin—those of Aurelius of Carthage and his successors Capreolus and Quodvultdeus, which shed little light on strategies for episcopal crisis management, although these men would have been in the thick of the Vandal incursions.

We turn now to Gallic writers. The self-conscious, intentional letter-collection of Sidonius Apollinaris, bishop of Clermont-Ferrand, relates a number of developments that he regards as crises. The most pressing of these is the Visigothic presence in Gaul, more particularly its less friendly aspects like raids and sieges.⁹³ The damage inflicted by the invaders on buildings and property is depicted as extreme (*Epp.* 3.2, 4.3, 6.10) to the extent that many edifices are roofless or otherwise in ruin, and the invidious position occupied by Sidonius' people between the Burgundians, supposedly their protectors, and the Visigoths (*Ep.* 3.4) escalated to the extent that the bishop himself had to go into temporary exile. The roads were unsafe for letter-bearers, who could be stopped and interrogated at will by the Visigothic thought-police (*Ep.* 9.3.2). Sidonius' management of these crises appears to have rested on one remedy—the introduction of the Rogation ceremony in his bishopric, which was intended to atone for and ward off crises of various kinds (*Epp.* 5.14, 7.1). But not so far under the surface there were other problems: during the (Arian) barbarian incursions a great number of bishops died and were not replaced, and consequently the congregations became depressed at the lack of leadership (*Ep.* 7.6). There is no other evidence in his letters for other strategies for addressing this situation, but the letters themselves are evidence for his strategic alliances with other bishops and patrons. Connected with the Visigothic invasions of his territory is what Sidonius regards as the crisis in Roman civilisation or the passing of the old order, to the extent that Latinity is being compromised (*Epp.* 3.3, 3.8, 4.17), but here we have to tread with caution because of the bishop's view of himself and his cultivated intimates as the last bastions of *Romanitas*. This view is mediated self-consciously through his letter-collection.

Ruricius of Limoges (d. c. 510), a younger contemporary and friend of Sidonius and Faustus of Riez, and like Sidonius a conscious stylist, makes no mention in his surviving letters of specific identifiable events or circumstances, preferring to use terms like *propter vitae istius turbédines ac procellas* (*Ep.* 2.52) and *necessitate temporis* (*Ep.* 2.65). Despite his oblique and

⁹² See Chapter 3, Case-study 2.

⁹³ This makes a sharp contrast to the Roman silence on similar subjects.

rhetorical style, however, and the fact that most of his letters are concerned with friendship and recommendation, it is possible to divine that at least on one occasion Ruricius was involved in negotiations to ransom a prisoner (*Ep.* 2.8), and that some of his family were moving south, presumably to escape the Goths (*Epp.* 2.34, 2.36, 2.40), which he tried to facilitate by letters of recommendation.

A more important witness than Ruricius' letters to crisis management in Gaul is the correspondence of Avitus, bishop of Vienne (d. 518), which contains some expansive details about contemporary crises. Apart from his concern about the Acacian schism (*Epp.* 7, 8 (?), 33, 34, 87), Avitus informs us about the ransoming of captives, both Italian and Burgundian (*Epp.* 10, 35, 49). Apparently at the request of the Arian Burgundian king, Gundobad, he composed two tractates against Eutychianism in letter-form (*Epp.* 86, 87; cf. 30). However, Avitus' real engagement is with the Arian-catholic schism,⁹⁴ in the course of which we encounter indications of religious pluralism in Gaul at the time. *Letter* 23 to the catholic Sigismund, who succeeded as Burgundian king in 516, reports a secret theological debate held in the presence of Gundobad; in *Letter* 31 to Sigismund Avitus enquires about the situation of Arians in Geneva, where the king has instituted an annual debate between Arians and catholics. Elsewhere we hear of a lay orator defending the catholic position in the presence of a king, presumed to be Gundobad (*Ep.* 53). When Sigismund celebrates the Arian Easter with Gundobad, Avitus comments that this is a diplomatic gesture (*Ep.* 77). In *Letter* 7 we have an historically important discussion of the transfer of previously Arian churches to the catholics: Avitus is concerned that, should the Arians return to power in Burgundy, such acceptance of their churches could be viewed as persecution and result in further religious tensions. He advocates that former Arian churches should be left abandoned and their sacred vessels melted down, although he is aware that his views are not shared by all Gallic catholics. In his account of the conversion of the Frankish Clovis from paganism to Christianity and his baptism (*Ep.* 46), Avitus mentions that others, presumably Arians, had attempted to convert Clovis to their creed. Like Ruricius, Avitus often uses a coded style of writing, which may be a reflection of the times in which they both wrote and consequently of the vulnerability of the letter-bearer, as outlined vividly by Sidonius.

Although episcopal letters survive from Lyon, Reims, Arles, and Valence, like those from Latin-speaking North Africa they are few in number and

⁹⁴ On which see the section on Arianism in Chapter 5.

uninformative in general. Similarly, epistolary remains from bishops outside Rome and those in Spain are patchy. We are thus thrown back on the substantive collections to ascertain the crises of the day and how bishops managed them. It is to the first of these crises, population displacement, that we now turn.

CHAPTER THREE

POPULATION DISPLACEMENT

INTRODUCTION

As we demonstrated in Chapter 1, the catastrophes and crises that appear in letters by Greek- and Latin-speaking bishops of the fifth and sixth centuries were of a regional nature; they were relatively common, and they personally affected the bishop or else he did not write about them.¹ As is the case with much contemporary population displacement, most displaced persons in Late Antiquity were driven from their homelands by violent conflict and/or religious dissent. Displacement could also be the result of the poverty cycle and food shortages, which forced inhabitants of rural areas to seek employment and handouts in cities. The displaced persons examined here may be divided into three major groups: (1) prisoners of war, (2) exiles, and (3) asylum-seekers and refugees.

Displacement of persons—even across boundaries separating the provinces of the later Roman empire, or what today we would call “countries”—operated in a local context, not a global one. The movement of large volumes of people away from trouble-spots was inevitable when border controls were non-existent, and people could pass unhindered (except by marauding bandits, pirates and/or slave-traders) from one province to another on foot, on horseback, or by boat. Natural barriers—mountain ranges such as the Alps, or the wide rivers of Central Europe such as the Rhine and the Danube, or the deserts of upper Egypt—posed the greatest challenges to those fleeing their homelands in search of food and safety. Our sources contain no record of any regular services being provided by the local, provincial or imperial government, although *ad hoc* assistance, such as donation of funds for buying ransoms, and gifts of food, money and clothing, were probably available on occasion to Roman citizens. By the fifth century, much of this civic activity passed to the responsibility of bishops.

¹ Some elements of this chapter may be found in Neil, Allen, “Displaced Peoples”, pp. 29–42.

The local context of late-antique population displacement determined a different set of episcopal responses from those appropriate today. Without Interpol or passports, the only means of performing character checks was through letters of recommendation, written from one notable to another vouching for the character of the letter-bearer. Letters of recommendation to and from bishops were the late-antique equivalent of permanent protection visas, as we shall see in the case-study on Theodoret of Cyrrhus. As in the contemporary situation, displaced persons were from all socio-economic backgrounds and of all ages. However, our episcopal sources prefer to focus only on those of high status, such as other clergy and aristocrats. Citizenship was then, as now, a key criterion in the reception of refugees.² We have no information about the treatment of those who arrived “unauthorized”, without such letters of recommendation or Roman citizenship. In the absence of government assistance, victims of conflict and religious persecution could be helped by local church communities, at the discretion of the bishop.

Late-antique letters provide little evidence of public attitudes towards displaced persons. Homilies that advocate giving alms to the needy often ranked “strangers” and “exiles” alongside the more obvious candidates for aid: the hungry, the thirsty, the naked and the sick.³ The frequency of such admonitions suggests healthy levels of community prejudice against any new arrivals in their midst. We consider the three major groups of displaced persons in turn—prisoners of war, exiles, and asylum-seekers and refugees—and the strategies adopted by bishops to deal with them, exemplified by case-studies where the evidence admits it.

PRISONERS OF WAR

Prisoners of war were an important category of displaced persons for bishops, since bishops were often the ones who took up the responsibility for releasing them by payment of ransoms, but they are little discussed in episcopal letters. This may have been due to an overall reticence on violent conflict, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. The capture of citizens in war produced no shortage of conundrums for bishops. What was the status of a marriage undertaken after one partner had been taken prisoner, and was not expected to return alive? At the beginning of the fifth century, under the law

² On the economic importance of citizenship in the fourth and fifth centuries, see Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, pp. 212–215.

³ E.g. Leo Mag., *Serm.* 10.1–2; CCSL 138, pp. 39–41.

of restoration of property upon rescue from captivity (*ius postliminii*), all of a ransomed citizen's rights were returned to them, except for the restoration of a marriage contracted before the abduction, unless both parties agreed.⁴ Pope Innocent (401/402–417) was approached to rule on such a case, that of a woman who had been ransomed from captivity and returned home to find her husband happily remarried. Innocent predictably ruled that Ursa's first marriage was still valid, but his ruling had no legal force, although it would have exerted a strong pressure on those who wished to have their marriage recognized by the church.⁵ Pope Leo followed suit, with some concession made to pastoral concerns.⁶ In the sixth century Justinian reformed the *postliminium* to allow remarriage only after a five-year wait for the missing spouse to return. Within the five-year period, a marriage could only be dissolved with legal penalties if the missing spouse was known to be alive.⁷

Ransom moneys were traditionally owed as a debt to the one who had paid it. Ransoms also had to be paid for free citizens captured by slave traders such as the Galatian people-dealers operating in the Mediterranean in the 420s, whose plight Augustine discussed in his letters, describing their ransom as an act of "almsgiving".⁸ The clergy of Hippo ransomed some 120 of these victims, men and women. As well as adding to their reputation for Christian charity, in this way the bishops increased their patronage networks.⁹ The sale of church property, especially church plate, to ransom

⁴ K. Sessa, "Ursa's Return: Captivity, Remarriage, and the Domestic Authority of Roman Bishops in Fifth-Century Italy", *J ECS* 19/3 (2011), pp. 401–432 at p. 413. Sessa, p. 402, notes that "Roman citizens who were kidnapped by enemy forces lost all their citizen rights, from property ownership and *patria potestas* to the contraction of a legitimate marriage."

⁵ *Ep.* 36 to Probus; PL 20, 602–603. See G.D. Dunn, "The Validity of Marriage in Cases of Captivity: The Letter of Innocent I to Probus", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 83 (2007), pp. 107–121. Cf. Sessa, "Ursa's Return", p. 422 n. 74, where she disagrees with Dunn, "The Validity", pp. 115–116: "Innocent did not underline the antithesis between civil and ecclesiastical law; he attempted to find common ground between them."

⁶ Leo, *Ep.* 159 to Nicetas; PL 54, 1138A–1140A (21 March 458). See Neil, *Leo the Great*, pp. 139–140; Sessa, "Ursa's Return", pp. 423–429.

⁷ Sessa, "Ursa's Return", p. 415, and lit. cited there in nn. 50 and 51.

⁸ *Ep.* 10*.7; NBA 23A, pp. 84, 86. The letter dates to between 415 and 420: NBA 23A, p. LXII. See the studies on those taken into captivity: in North Africa, J. Rougé, "Escroquerie et brigandage en Afrique romaine au temps de saint Augustin (Epist. 8* et 10*)", in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 177–188 at pp. 183–188; C. Lepelley, "Liberté, colonat et esclavage d'après la Lettre 24*": la juridiction épiscopale 'de liberali causa', in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 329–342; in Gaul, Klingshirn, "Charity and Power", pp. 183–203.

⁹ Klingshirn, "Charity and Power", p. 198, on Symmachus' activities as *redemptor captivorum*, and *amator pauperum*: "Indeed, [Symmachus'] willingness to use the wealth of the church on behalf of clerics, captives, *peregrini* and the poor—what the senate most feared—

prisoners is not mentioned in our sources, although it is clear from conciliar canons that some bishops went to such lengths. Augustine is said by his hagiographer Possidius to have done so, perhaps following the example of his mentor Ambrose.¹⁰ A letter of the bishops of Tours to the people, preserved in the *acta* of the second Council of Tours (567), prescribed that residents should deposit a tithe with the bishop to cover ransoms.¹¹ Irish penitentials of the period contain references to collections towards ransom funds, sometimes made with fraudulent intent.¹² While the ransoming of prisoners was celebrated in *Libri Pontificales* of Rome and Ravenna, and in hagiography more generally,¹³ they are curiously absent from epistolary corpora. An exception is Gelasius I (492–496) who makes two mentions of redeeming captives in his letters. He petitions Rusticus, bishop of Lyons, to help Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia (466–496), who is about to come to Lyons to discover and redeem captives of his people in those parts.¹⁴ Gelasius directs the bishops of Sicily to distribute church funds to the needy (i.e.

made it possible for him to exercise a greater and more extensive patronage than any other Roman aristocrat”

¹⁰ *Augustini vita scripta a Possidio episcopo* 24.15; ed. A.A.R. Bastiaensen, *Vita di Cipriano. Vita di Ambrogio. Vita di Agostino*, 4th ed., Vite dei Santi dal secolo III al secolo IV, vol. 3 (Milan, 1997), pp. 127–241 at p. 194. 66–68. Ambrose of Milan defends his actions against critics in *De off.* 2.28.136–143; ed. I.J. Davidson, *Ambrose. De officiis. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2002), vol. 1, pp. 342–348. Synods that proscribed the selling of church plate by bishops include the Council of Arles (314) in Canon 14; ed. C. Munier, *Concilia Galliae a. 314–a. 506*, CCSL 148B (Turnhout, 1963), pp. 12, 42–51. The Council of Clichy (626–627) in Canon 25 made an exception for bishops who were forced to sell holy vessels in order to redeem captives: ‘Si quis episcopus, excepto si euerit ardua necessitas pro redemptione captiuorum, ministeria sancta frangere pro qualemcumque conditione presumpserit, biennio ab officio cessauit ecclesiae.’ Ed. C. De Clercq, *Concilia Galliae a. 511–a. 695*, CCSL 148A (Turnhout, 1963), p. 296.

¹¹ Council of Tours II (a. 567), *Epistula prouinciae Turonensis ad plebem*; CCSL 148A, p. 199, 69–81. They speak of an imminent slaughter (*cladem*), possibly a plague.

¹² Ed. L. Bieler, *The Irish Penitentials* (Dublin, 1963; repr. 1975), pp. 54–55, 84–85, 86–87 and 126–127.

¹³ See also the Greek *Vita Melaniae* 19–20; ed. D. Gorce, SC 90 (Paris, 1962), pp. 168–171; Ennodius, *Vita Epiphani* 98–99 and 136–177; ed. Vogel, MGH AA 7 (Berlin, 1885; repr. Munich, 1981), pp. 96, 101–106; Eugippius, *Vita Severini* 9–10; ed., trans. P. Régerat, SC 374 (Paris, 1991), pp. 202–209; on Paulinus of Nola’s ransom of a widow’s son, see Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* 3.1.1–8; eds., trans. A. de Vogüé, P. Antin, SC 260 (Paris, 1979), pp. 256–257. We are grateful to Stephen Lake for these references from his forthcoming work, *The Church and the Sick* (in preparation). On the ransoming of prisoners and slaves in Merovingian hagiography, in particular, see F. Graus, “Die Gewalt bei den Anfängen des Feudalismus und die ‘Gefangenenerbefreiungen’ der merowingischen Hagiographie”, *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 1 (1961), pp. 61–156.

¹⁴ *Ep.* 13; ed. Thiel, p. 359. Cf. *Vita Epiphani*, 151; MGH AA 7, p. 103.

widows, orphans, paupers and clerics), and claim the remainder for themselves, so that they can offer largesse to travellers (*peregrini*) and captives.¹⁵ Such episcopal largesse is often mentioned in contemporary historiography but rarely in bishops' letters. According to Prosper of Aquitaine's *Epitoma chronicon*, "many thousands" of people were taken prisoner in 455 during Geiseric's sack of Rome, chosen for their age and their skills,¹⁶ but Leo makes no mention of ransoming these or any other prisoners in his collected letters. Indeed he does not mention leading a senatorial deputation to the Hun leader Attila in 453, which paid a substantial sum to avert the Hun's capture of Rome.

Prisoners need not be from a bishop's own see to warrant aid. Avitus of Vienne was involved in the ransoming of Italian captives from Gundobad in 494/6 undertaken by Epiphanius of Pavia, which is again not mentioned in Avitus' relatively large letter-collection.¹⁷ In a letter to Eustorgius, bishop of Milan, it transpires that Avitus had helped Eustorgius to ransom Italian prisoners, but had not received money in return for Burgundian prisoners taken by Theodoric.¹⁸ Shanzer and Wood comment, "The operation may well have been one of mutual ransoming."¹⁹ In a later letter to Maximus of Pavia,²⁰ who is in charge of caring for Gallic captives and assisting their relatives who come from Gaul to ransom them, Avitus recommends a priest who is also travelling there in search of a relative. He also petitions Maximus to locate Avulus, the son of a nobleman, who had been taken as a hostage four years earlier. Avitus requests a letter of confirmation that those hostages in exile there are able to regain their freedom.

Even enemy prisoners were sometimes ransomed, if we are to believe the account of the historian Socrates, who reports that Acacius, the fifth-century bishop of Amida, melted church plate to ransom around 7000 starving

¹⁵ *Ep.* 17.1; ed. Thiel, p. 382: 'Reliquum sibi episcopi vindicent, ut, sicut antea diximus, peregrinorum atque captivorum largitores esse possint.'

¹⁶ Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon edita primum a. CCCXXXIII continuata ad a. CCCCLV*, 1375, a. 455; ed. T. Mommsen, *Chronicon minorum saec. IV–VII*, MGH AA 9 (Berlin, 1892; repr. 1961), vol. 1, p. 484.

¹⁷ Cf. Ennodius, *Vita Epiphani* 170; ed. Vogel, MGH AA 7, p. 105, 26–32; *Vita Epiphani* 173–174; *ibid.*, p. 106, 6–13.

¹⁸ Avitus, *Ep.* 10; ed. R. Peiper, MGH AA 6/2 (Berlin, 1883), p. 44 (c. 508 CE); trans. D. Shanzer, I. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne, Letters and Selected Prose* (Liverpool, 2002), pp. 351–352. We follow the numbering of Shanzer and Wood.

¹⁹ Shanzer, Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, p. 351.

²⁰ Avitus, *Ep.* 12; ed. Peiper, MGH AA 6/2, p. 45; trans. Shanzer, Wood, pp. 352–353. See also Avitus, *Ep.* 35 to the prefect Liberius, trans. Shanzer, Wood, pp. 355–356.

Persian prisoners from the Byzantines, supported them for a while and sent them home with supplies for the journey.²¹

In the early sixth century Symmachus of Rome and Caesarius of Arles were both celebrated for the charitable activity of ransoming Roman prisoners, in northern Italy and Gaul, with funds raised by the church and the Roman senate.²² Caesarius is said to have sold church plate (censers, chalices and patens) as well as consecrated ornaments for the purpose,²³ which outraged some of his clergy. Symmachus also sent money and clothing to exiled bishops in the Arian sees of Africa and Sardinia.²⁴ His surviving letters contain a letter of consolation to exiled bishops in Africa, where he informs them that he is sending relics of Sts Nazarius and Romanus as they had requested in letters to his deacon Hormisdas.²⁵ Relic-donation is a novel strategy for consolation of the displaced. Here again we find bishops writing to each other freely to and from exile.

The Lombard invasions from 568 onwards displaced many Romans in northern and central Italy. While the capture and destruction of cities is a common theme in the Ravennan bishops' record, *Liber Pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis* (LPR), prisoners of war do not rate a mention in the letters. LPR focuses only on royal captives such as the deposed Lombard Queen Malasuintha, sent into exile in Volsena in 533.²⁶ Another royal hostage was the daughter of the Lombard king Agilulf, whom the Roman general Gallinicus captured in Parma with her husband Godescalc at the end of the sixth century or early seventh century. The royal couple was taken to the imperial court at Ravenna; in retaliation, Agilulf destroyed the city of Cremona and harassed Mantua.²⁷ No episcopal action on behalf of Arian royalty could be expected. The chapter devoted to Bishop Marinian (595–606) provides slight evidence that ransoming captives was considered part of a Raven-

²¹ Socrates, *HE* 7.21.1–6; ed. G.C. Hansen, *Sokrates: Kirchengeschichte*, GCS NF 1 (Berlin, 1995), pp. 367–368 (c. 422 CE).

²² *LP* 1, p. 263: 'Hic captivos per Ligurias et Mediolano et per diversas provincias pecuniis redemit et dona multiplicavit et dimisit.' 'He ransomed for cash prisoners in the Ligurias, Milan and various provinces; he gave them many gifts and let them go their way.' Trans. Davis, p. 48.

²³ The sale of church plate: *Vita Caesarii Arelatensis*, 1.32; ed. G. Morin, trans. M.-J. Delage, SC 536 (Paris, 2010), pp. 190–192; the objections of his clergy: *Vita Caesarii Arelatensis* 1.33; SC 536, p. 192. See discussion in Klingshirn, 'Charity and Power', pp. 189–192, 198–199.

²⁴ *LP* 1, p. 263.

²⁵ *Ep.* 11; ed. Thiel, pp. 708–709, dated to between 507 and 512. Sirmond's emendation of the name 'Hormisdas' in place of the manuscript reading H. is accepted by Thiel, p. 709, n. 3.

²⁶ *LPR* ch. 62; ed. D.M. Deliyannis, CCCM 199 (Turnhout, 2006), p. 232.

²⁷ *LPR* ch. 101; CCCM 199, p. 270.

nan bishop's duty, where Agnellus describes the ways in which a bishop is greater than a king: "[T]he king [thinks] that he might lead rebels captive, the bishop that he might purchase, redeem, and release captives ...".²⁸ This is obviously not an indication of when the practice began in Ravenna, and we must remember that Agnellus was writing in the first half of the ninth century. His first mention of a specific bishop ransoming captives is the following bishop of Ravenna, John III (606–625).²⁹ Letters from Ravennan bishops are sadly few, and without the witness of the *LPR*, three centuries later, we would have no idea of any such activities on behalf of prisoners of war. Exceptional epistolary evidence for the ransoming of captives comes from several letters of Gallic bishops of the late fifth century. Two letters on ransoming were sent by Faustus of Riez to Ruricius of Limoges. The first letter recommends the bearer who had been held captive in Lyon, and whose wife and children are still in captivity there, and requests Ruricius' aid on their behalf.³⁰ Faustus' second letter on the subject recommends the bearer, the priest Florentius, who seeks to ransom his sister, but it is unclear in this case what action Faustus expects Ruricius to take.³¹ Ruricius wrote to the bishop of Arles commending the plight of a priest who had disposed of personal property in order to ransom his brother from unspecified soldiers—Mathisen suggests they were either Bretons or Franks.³² Sidonius Apollinaris, bishop of Clermont from 469/470, praised his brother-in-law Ecdicius, a native of Clermont, who saved the town from the Goths. Sidonius thanks him for saving the leading families there from the "scurf of Celtic speech" ('sermonis Celtici squamam') and preventing them from becoming barbarians.³³ It is not clear whether this is about ransoming or military intervention. Sidonius also wrote to fellow-bishop Graecus of Marseille, begging for help and prayers as the region of Auvergne faced Gothic invasion:

²⁸ *LPR* ch. 100; CCCM 199, p. 269: 'rex ut captiuos ducat rebelles, episcopus ut emat captiuos, redimat et absoluat ...' Trans. D.M. Deliyannis, *Agnellus of Ravenna. The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna* (Washington, DC, 2004), p. 216.

²⁹ *LPR* ch. 104; CCCM 199, p. 272: 'compeditorum absolutur'; trans. Deliyannis, p. 218: "freer of captives".

³⁰ Ruricius, *Ep.* 11; ed. Krusch, MGH AA 8 (Berlin, 1887; repr. Munich, 1985), p. 270; trans. R.W. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends: A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul*, TTH 30 (Liverpool, 1999), pp. 103–104. Date: c. 485/486.

³¹ *Ep.* 12; ed. Krusch, MGH AA 8, pp. 270–271; trans. Mathisen, pp. 104–105. Date: c. 485/486.

³² Ruricius, *Ep.* 2.8; ed. Krusch, MGH AA 8, pp. 299–350; to Aeonius, bishop of Arles, concerning the priest Possessor, c. 490/502. Trans. Mathisen, *Ruricius of Limoges*, pp. 145–146.

³³ Sidonius, *Ep.* 3.3; ed. C. Luetjohann, MGH AA 8 (Berlin, 1887), p. 41, 15. Trans. W.B. Anderson, *Sidonius: Poems and Letters*, Loeb Classical Library 420, 2nd ed. (London, UK, Cambridge, MA, 1965, repr. 1984), vol. 2, pp. 12–21.

If you cannot save us in our extremity, at least secure by unceasing prayer that the blood of those whose liberty is doomed may still survive; provide land for the exiles, ransom for the captives-to-be, and aid for the refugees on their way. If our walls are opened to admit our foes, let not yours be closed to exclude your friends.³⁴

Although Gaul offers the richest evidence for episcopal involvement in the ransom of captives, it is not sufficient to warrant a case-study of any particular bishop.

EXILE, FLIGHT, CONFINEMENT

In the fifth and sixth centuries we have epistolary evidence of countless bishops being exiled from their sees, taking to flight, or being confined in various ways, thus constituting a crisis for themselves and their flocks.³⁵ Greek terms used in our sources are *exoria* (indicating temporary or permanent banishment or deportation) and *periorismos* (connoting a confinement within prescribed parameters). Common Latin terms are *exilium*, *relegatio* and *deportatio*.³⁶ Abundant evidence of bishops' relegation is also available from other literary sources, such as chronicles and histories. Many of these bishops were forced to leave their sees as a result of imperial edicts; others fled the hostile local populace; still others were imprisoned, confined to their sees, or con-

³⁴ Sidonius, *Ep.* 7.7; ed. C. Luetjohann, MGH AA 8, p. 111, 25–29; trans. Anderson, vol. 2, p. 331.

³⁵ In general see E. Grasmück, *Exilium. Untersuchungen zur Verbannung in der Antike*, Rechts- und staatswissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Görres-Gesellschaft, NF 30 (Paderborn, 1978); M. Vallejo Girvés, "Obispos exiliados: Mártires políticos entre el Concilio de Nicea y la eclosión monofisita", in ed. E. Reinhardt, *Tempus implendi promissa. Homenaje al professor Domingo Ramos-Lissón*, Instituto de historia de la Iglesia, Facultad de teología, Universidad de Navarra, Historia de la Iglesia 33 (Pamplona, 2000), pp. 507–533; also the volumes edited (1) by P. Blaudeau, *Exil et relégation: les tribulations du sage et du saint durant l'antiquité romaine et chrétienne (I^{er}–VI^e siècle ap.J.-C.)*, Actes du colloque organisé par le Centre Jean-Charles Picard, Université de Paris XII-Val-de-Marne, 17–18 juin 2005 (Paris, 2008), esp. R. Delmaire, "Exile, relégation, déportation dans la législation du Bas-Empire", pp. 115–132, E. Wirbelauer, "Comment exiler un pape?", pp. 255–272, and Blaudeau, "Quand les papes parlent d'exil: l'affirmation d'une conception pontificale de la peine d'éloignement durant la controverse monophysite (449–523)", pp. 273–308; and (2) by Leemans et al., eds., *Episcopal Elections. On literature from exile* see J.-M. Claassen, *Displaced Persons. The Literature of Exile from Cicero to Boethius* (Madison, WI, 1999), esp. pp. 9–15; B. Neil, "From *tristitia* to *gaudia*. The Exile and Martyrdom of Pope Martin I", in ed. J. Leemans, *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Antique Christianity. Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 241 (Leuven, 2010), pp. 179–194.

³⁶ On the implications of these terms see further Delmaire, "Exile, relégation, déportation"; Vallejo Girvés, "Obispos exiliados: Mártires", pp. 507–533.

signed to monasteries.³⁷ We have examples of bishops who went into hiding, not necessarily abroad, or, who, as in the case of Theodoret of Cyrrihus, lived in “exile” in their sees. Still others, like the bishops of Rome, John I, Silverius and Vigilius, were incarcerated at a distance from their jurisdiction, in Ravenna, the Pontine islands and Constantinople respectively.³⁸

At the second Council of Ephesus in 449 we have the sordid episode of the condemnation of Bishop Flavian of Constantinople, followed by violent physical attacks on his person which caused his death in exile shortly afterwards.³⁹ However, without a doubt the greatest catalyst for the banishment of bishops during these two centuries was the religious conflict that followed the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The patriarchate of Antioch and the church of Syria in general suffered more than most, particularly after the Chalcedonian restoration by Emperor Justin I from 518 onwards. That period witnessed a mass exodus of bishops,⁴⁰ clergy and monastics, testified to in the letters of Severus, patriarch of Antioch (512–518), who spent twenty years in refuge in Egypt. We deal in detail *infra* with Severus as a refugee.⁴¹ The formation of a shadow anti-Chalcedonian episcopate during the reign of Justinian meant that many threatened bishops like Severus spent most of their time in hiding and that succession was hotly contested, as we read in a remarkable dossier of letters, *DM*.⁴² The most notorious of these late sixth-century bishops is the divisive patriarch of Antioch, Paul the Black (564–581), who spent the years 575–581 in exile in Constantinople and other periods in the camp of the Christian Arab leader al-Moundhir.⁴³

³⁷ On this last group see M. Vallejo Girvés, “Obispos exiliados y confinados en monasterios en época protobyzantina”, *Praktika* 2, Parnassos Literary Society (2002), pp. 947–965; Delmaire, “Exile, relégation, déportation”, pp. 123–124 (mostly on imperial officials); J. Hillner, “Monastic Imprisonment in Justinian’s Novels”, *J ECS* 15/2 (2007), pp. 205–237.

³⁸ On these three bishops of Rome see T. Sardella, *EDP*, 1, s.v. Giovanni I, pp. 483–487, and C. Sotinel, *ibid.*, s.v. Silverio, pp. 508–512 and *ibid.*, s.v. Vigilio, pp. 512–529, respectively. The exile of Vigilius is discussed in more detail in Case-study 3 below.

³⁹ See in detail H. Chadwick, “The Exile and Death of Flavian of Constantinople: A Prologue to the Council of Chalcedon”, *JTS* 6 (1955), pp. 17–34.

⁴⁰ See further E. Honigsmann, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d’Asie antérieure au VI^e siècle*, CSCO 127, Subsidia 2 (Louvain, 1951), pp. 142–154; V.L. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2008), pp. 22–34.

⁴¹ See Case-study 5 below; see also Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, pp. 25–30, 52–54. On Severus’ period in exile see Y.N. Youssef, “Severus of Antioch in Scetis”, *Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 43 (2006), pp. 142–163, with literature.

⁴² See further Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 265–303; Menze, *Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*; P. Allen, “Episcopal Succession in Antioch in the Sixth Century”, in eds. Leemans et al., *Episcopal Elections*, pp. 24–38.

⁴³ Details in E.W. Brooks, “The Patriarch Paul of Antioch and the Alexandrine Schism of

The situation in Egypt after Chalcedon was also volatile, as we know from letters of the Alexandrian Patriarch Timothy Aelurus, who spent most of his patriarchate (457–477) in banishment at Gangra (460–464) and the Chersonese (464/5–475).⁴⁴ Timothy was, however, not totally bereft of scholarly resources, as we can see from a series of proof-texts against Eutychianists appended to his first surviving letter from Gangra.⁴⁵ From Gallic bishops we have numerous letters describing the exile of many of them for religious or political reasons.⁴⁶ Let two examples suffice here. Bishop Faustus of Riez was banished in 477 during the reign of the Arian Visigothic king Euric for his anti-Arian writings. His place of exile seems to have been Limoges *chez* Bishop Ruricius.⁴⁷ Because of his resistance to the Visigoths, Bishop Sidonius Apollinaris of Clermont-Ferrand was exiled first in 475 to the area around Carcassonne and imprisoned there. He relates with pathos the anxieties he experienced, including his accommodation downstairs from two old Gothic women who quarrelled, drank and vomited all the time.⁴⁸ Sidonius then went to Bordeaux, where the imperial court was in residence and where he was able to negotiate his return to his see.⁴⁹ In North Africa during the first

575", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1930), pp. 468–476. See Case-study 2 on *DM* in Chapter 5 below.

⁴⁴ See R.Y. Ebied, L.R. Wickham, "A Collection of Unpublished Letters of Timothy Aelurus", *JTS* ns 21 (1970), pp. 321–369. On Timothy see P. Blaudeau, "Timothée Aelure et la direction ecclésiastique de l'Empire post-chalcédonien", *Revue des Études Byzantines* 54 (1996), pp. 107–133, esp. 112 on Timothy's exiles. For the Chersonese as a place of exile see E. Jastrzebowska, "Chersonèse dans l'Antiquité tardive: état des recherches et bibliographie", *Antiquité Tardive* 9 (2001), pp. 399–418.

⁴⁵ *Ep. ad Constantinopolitanos* (CPG 5476), where extracts from Athanasius, Julius, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, Theophilus, Cyril, Gregory of Nazianzus and John Chrysostom are cited.

⁴⁶ See in detail F. Prévot, V. Gauge, "Évêques gaulois à l'épreuve de l'exil aux V^e et VI^e siècles", in ed. Blaudeau, *Exil et relégation*, pp. 309–349.

⁴⁷ See *Epp.* 6, 9 (and possibly 10).

⁴⁸ *Ep.* 8.3; see A. Loyer, *Sidonius Apollinaire. Tome III. Lettres (Livres VI–IX)* (Paris, 1970), p. 86. For the flight of Sidonius' son Apollinaris in 479, see R.W. Mathisen, "Emigrants, Exiles, and Survivors: Aristocratic Options in Visigothic Aquitania", *Phoenix* 38/2 (1984), pp. 159–170 at p. 167. On the quality of accommodation for exiles cf. the complaints of the anti-Chalcedonian bishop of Mabbug, Philoxenus, in a letter to his monks from his place of exile in Gangra, to the effect that he was shut up in a room above the kitchen of a caravanserai, and was suffocated by the smoke: ed. A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog, Lettre aux moines de Senoun*, CSCO 231, Scr. Syr. 98, pp. 93–94 (text), CSCO 232, Scr. Syr. 99, pp. 77–78 (trans.) (Louvain, 1963).

⁴⁹ *Epp.* 7.7.6, 9.3.3. On the former see J. van Waarden, *Writing to Survive. A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris. Letters Book 7*, vol. 1: *The Episcopal Letters 1–11*, LAHR 2 (Leuven, 2010), pp. 334–378.

two decades of the sixth century there was a mass exile of bishops to Sardinia and other destinations as a result of the Arian Vandal occupation, a crisis that will be discussed when we come to our second case-study, Fulgentius of Ruspe.

ASYLUM-SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Churches and altars in particular, offered the right of sanctuary to asylum-seekers from the end of the fourth century,⁵⁰ as numerous episcopal letters attest.⁵¹ Bishops imposed excommunication on those who violated the sanctuary of the church.⁵² The custom of ecclesial sanctuary was enforced by a constitution issued in 431, which charged those who violated it with the crime of sacrilege.⁵³ Nevertheless, the law was often violated, as four fragmentary letters of Gelasius show. Those who are reported to have forced someone out of a church's sanctuary are deemed unworthy of entering it.⁵⁴ The right of sanctuary did not apply to runaway slaves, however: a slave who fled to a church in fear of his master would be given back to his master if an

⁵⁰ See A. Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere. Naissance du droit d'asile dans les églises (IV^e–milieu du V^e s.)*, De l'archéologie à histoire (Paris, 1994), and the lit. there cited; Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, pp. 253–258, gives a survey of canon law and imperial edicts on ecclesiastical asylum up to the sixth century.

⁵¹ E.g. Ruricius, *Ep.* 2.20; ed. Krusch, MGH AA 8, p. 329. The letter is addressed to Rusticus (c. 490/500), probably a friend of Sidonius Apollinaris, resident at Bordeaux, and intercedes on behalf of Baxo, apparently a dependent of Rusticus, who has sought refuge in a church in Userca (Uzerche). Ruricius advises Rusticus to reap the spiritual benefits of pardoning Baxo. See also Augustine, *Ep.* 22.3*; NBA 23A, p. 194: 'Ita fit, ut per paucis qui confugiunt ad ecclesiam utcumque solacio uel praesidio esse ualeamus ...', where he bemoans the fact that bishops can only give assistance to a very small number of those who seek refuge within the church (March 420); Firmus of Caesarea, *Ep.* 43, eds. Calvet-Sebasti, Gatier, pp. 166–167, discusses the case of runaway slaves or *coloni* who had sought asylum in the Basiliades in Caesarea, and from there fled to another spot, leaving the director of the Basiliades to pay all their taxes (cf. a similar circumstance in Firmus, *Ep.* 36, both letters being written before 439).

⁵² Augustine, *Ep.* 1* to Classicianus; NBA 23A, pp. 2–6; and *Ep.* 250; NBA 23, pp. 860–864 to Bishop Auxilius on the violation of asylum-seekers who were unworthy of it; his young colleague Auxilius had pronounced the anathema not only on his friend Classicianus but his whole family for violating the asylum of a church—Augustine seeks to have the anathema lifted. The letters are examined by Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, pp. 195–201.

⁵³ *CTh* 9.45.4 of 23 March 431; issued again in Greek in *CJ* 1.12.3, p. 65. Socrates, *HE* 7.33.1–5; ed. Hansen, *GCS NF* 1, p. 382, 6–19 (*SC* 506, p. 120), attributes the promulgation of this law to events in November 430, when armed slaves sullied the sanctuary of a church in Constantinople. See the discussion of Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, pp. 218–220.

⁵⁴ Gelasius, *Frag.* 39 to Bishop Epiphanius; ed. Thiel, p. 504; *Frag.* 40 to Bishops Victor, Constantine, Martyrius, Felicissimus, Serenus and Timothy; ed. Thiel, pp. 504–505.

oath had been taken that the slave would not be punished.⁵⁵ An exception was made for Christian slaves in the service of Jewish masters, where their faith was threatened: in the case of a Christian slave who had been forcibly circumcised by his Jewish master and had subsequently taken refuge in the church of Venefrana, Gelasius instructed the local bishops to investigate the truth of the slave's claims, "so that we do not deny the rights of a legitimate master".⁵⁶ By the end of the sixth century, Jews were forbidden to own Christian slaves, in Italy at least.⁵⁷

Those who sought asylum outside their homelands frequently depended on the mercy of the bishop. Refugees were often the casualties of religious controversy in their homelands, especially if they were in the minority group—Arians in northern Italy and Constantinople; Manicheans and Donatists in North Africa come into this category. From 429 many refugees fled to Rome in the wake of persecution of non-Arian Christians in North Africa, especially in *Africa proconsularis*, after the settlement of the Vandals under the Arian king Geiseric.⁵⁸ These refugees, a great number of whom were aristocrats whose estates were seized in the Vandal settlement, sought the assistance of the bishop of Rome for donations of food, money and clothing, but such generosity did not extend to asylum-seekers who were also Manicheans.

Mani (d. 276/77), the Babylonian founder of Manicheism, self-proclaimed "apostle of Christ", "Paraclete" and "seal of the prophets", attracted a huge following with his particular brand of syncretistic gnosticism.⁵⁹ In the West,

⁵⁵ *CTh* 9.45.5, issued on 28 March 432; a later version appeared in *CJ* 1.12.4, p. 66. Epistolary evidence includes Gelasius, *Frag.* 41 to Bishop Boniface; ed. Thiel, pp. 505–506; Avitus of Vienne, *Ep.* 44 to Gundobad, to whom Avitus returns under guard a slave who had sought sanctuary in a church to avoid standing witness in a trial. See Ducloux, *Ad ecclesiam confugere*, pp. 237–259, on the limits applied to refuge in churches sought by slaves and plebeians.

⁵⁶ Gelasius, *Frag.* 43 to bishops Siracsius, Constantius and Laurence; ed. Thiel, p. 507: 'nec servus hac objectione mentitis competentis iura dominii declinare contendunt.' On the circumcision of slaves by Jews cf. *Constitutio Sirmondiana* 4; *CTh* 5.9–10; trans. C. Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton, NJ, 1952), p. 479.

⁵⁷ E.g. Gregory I, *Reg.* 2.45; ed. D. Norberg, *Registrum epistularum Gregorii Magni*, CCL 140, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 1982), p. 137; *Reg.* 4.21; ed. Norberg, CCL 140, p. 239. See discussion of A. Serfass, "Slavery and Pope Gregory the Great", *J ECS* 14/1 (2006), pp. 77–103, esp. p. 99.

⁵⁸ P. Heather, "Christianity and the Vandals in the Reign of Geiseric", in eds. J. Drinkwater, B. Salway, *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected: Essays Presented by Colleagues, Friends and Pupils*, Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement (London, 2007), pp. 137–146.

⁵⁹ On Mani's titles, see the discussion in eds., trans. H.G. Schipper, J. van Oort, *St. Leo the Great, Sermons and Letters Against the Manichaeans. Selected Fragments*, Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum Series Latina 1 (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 89–90; and their general bibliography at

the religion assumed certain characteristics common to Christianity in an attempt to integrate into the mainstream religion, giving it the appearance of an esoteric sect. Manichean communities in North Africa and Rome posed a particular threat to the Christian community because they challenged it from within, by claiming to be Christians and participating in mainstream worship. In this way they sought to make converts of orthodox Christians; women especially were said to be prone to their persuasions. They even appointed their own bishops, as for example the African Faustus of Milevis, with whom the young Augustine debated in 385, prior to his conversion.⁶⁰ They abstained from meat and wine at all times, even the Eucharistic sacrament of the cup, fasted on Sundays and proscribed procreation. All of these challenges to the doctrines and ritual practices of the catholic church, as well as their alleged immorality and their unorthodox interpretations of Scripture, combined to make them one of the most serious threats facing the episcopal office in North Africa and Italy in the fifth century. It seems that Spain never saw the development of a genuine Manichean community, even though Manichean refugees from North Africa may have fled to the Iberian peninsula in the wake of the Vandal invasions.⁶¹

The importance of letters of recommendation for establishing one's religious credentials is revealed in the decree of Pope Anastasius I (399–401/2) that any cleric arriving from overseas bring five letters of recommendation to prove that he was not a Manichee.⁶² It is not stipulated that these clerics "from overseas" were refugees, although it is of course possible. An imperial edict of 425 expelled from the city of Rome "Manichean heretics or schismatics or astrologers and every sect opposed to the catholics".⁶³ In North Africa

pp. 125–132. On the gnostic elements of Manicheism, see U. Bianchi, "Some Reflections on the Greek Origins of Gnostic Ontology, and the Christian Origin of the Gnostic Saviour", in eds. A. Logan, A.J.M. Wedderburn, *New Testament and Gnosis. Essays in Honour of Robert McLachlan Wilson* (London, New York, 1983), pp. 38–45, esp. pp. 40–44. The growth of Manicheism in Late Antiquity, and its continuation in China, is studied by S.N.C. Lieu, *Manicheism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 63, 2nd ed. (Tübingen, 1992). A recent collection focussing on the Latin West is offered by eds. J. van Oort, O. Wermelinger, G. Wurst, *Augustine and Manichaeism in the Latin West*, Nag Hammadi and Manichean Studies 49 (Leiden, Boston, 2001). See further Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 172–194.

⁶⁰ Augustine, *Confessiones* 5.3.3; NBA 1, p. 116; and *Contra Faustum* 1.1; NBA 14, p. 6. An unnamed Manichean bishop was brought to trial by Leo Mag., *Serm.* 16.4; ed. Chavasse, *CCSL* 138, p. 65.

⁶¹ Schipper, van Oort, *Sermons and Letters*, p. 5.

⁶² *LP* 1, p. 218.

⁶³ *CTh* 16.5.62; ed. T. Mommsen, p. 877. Trans. J. Rougé, *Code Théodosien. Livre XVI*, SC 497 (Paris, 2005), p. 328.

a trial was staged under the tribune Ursus between 421 and 428, and allegations of sexual immorality were made. Given that confessions may well have been extracted under torture,⁶⁴ it is impossible to assess the truth of the allegations.

While in their preaching bishops of Rome, like most bishops, frequently emphasized the need for their congregations to show compassion to strangers and exiles,⁶⁵ there were clear limitations imposed on such generosity. In a homily delivered on the fast of December in December 443, Leo explicitly condemned the Manichees “who have become more numerous amongst us due to the disturbances in other regions.”⁶⁶ In 443 to 444, Leo I convened an investigation into the Manichean presence in Rome, presided over by himself in the presence of bishops, members of the senate and other aristocracy.⁶⁷ Leo’s intervention is an excellent example of a bishop’s use of the strategy of social exclusion—backed by a successful appeal to imperial authority—to deal with the religious and practical problems posed by the influx of Manichees to the city of Rome.⁶⁸

In letters and homilies Leo encouraged the laity and clergy to search out and denounce Manichees and to avoid all contact with them.⁶⁹ The relaxation of the normal penalties for false denunciations meant that no contrary law suit could be brought against the accuser or any stiff penalties applied if the accusation was found to be false.⁷⁰ Prosper claimed that Leo’s investigation in Rome had salutary effects for the whole world since the Manichees, in their forced confessions, had named members of other urban networks of teachers, bishops and priests.⁷¹ Theodoret of Cyrrhus joined Prosper in prais-

⁶⁴ *Hormisdas* ch. 9; *LP* 1, p. 270.

⁶⁵ E.g. Leo I, *Serm.* 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 on the November Collects; and *Serm.* 86–94 on the September fasts. See the discussion of the sources by Freu, *Les figures du pauvre*, pp. 430–431.

⁶⁶ *Serm.* 16.5; ed. Chavassee, p. 65: ‘Hos itaque homines, dilectissimi, per omnia execrables atque pestiferos, quos aliarum regionum perturbatio nobis intulit crebriores, ab amicitia uestra penitus abdicat.’ Leo’s *Serm.* 16 is among the anti-Manichean documents in Schipper, van Oort, *Sermons and Letters*.

⁶⁷ Leo Mag., *Ep.* 7; eds., trans. Schipper, van Oort, pp. 46–49; *Serm.* 16; ed. Chavassee, CCL 138, pp. 61–67. See discussion of these sources in Lieu, *Manicheism*, pp. 204–206; other texts in which Leo deals with Mani and Manicheism are dealt with by Schipper, van Oort, *Sermons and Letters*, pp. 113–118.

⁶⁸ See Neil, “A Crisis of Orthodoxy”, pp. 148–151.

⁶⁹ E.g. Leo Mag., *Ep.* 7.2 (PL 54, 621B–622A); cf. *Serm.* 9.4 (ed. Chavassee, CCL 138, p. 37); *Serm.* 16.5 (ed. Chavassee, CCL 138, p. 66); *Serm.* 34.5 (ed. Chavassee, CCL 138, pp. 186–187); *Serm.* 42.5 (ed. Chavassee, CCL 138A, pp. 246–248).

⁷⁰ *Valentiniani novella* 18; eds. Schipper, van Oort, *Sermons and Letters*, p. 50.

⁷¹ Prosper, *Epitoma Chronicon*, 1350, a. 443; ed. Mommsen, p. 479.

ing Leo's zeal, saying that it had inspired many eastern clerics to do likewise, a rare piece of evidence for the presence of Manicheans in the East.⁷²

In such a climate of surveillance and denunciation, which lasted for some eighteen months until 444, Manichean refugees would have been reluctant to come forward for help. Orthodoxy, as defined by the bishop of Rome, was thus raised above Roman citizenship as a criterion for material aid. Here we see in operation the demonizing strategy that was typical of episcopal policies of social exclusion, especially in times of social upheaval. Whether Roman bishops were typical in their persecution of this category of refugees is difficult to assess in view of the lack of evidence from other sees. In North Africa itself, Augustine of Hippo Regius (396–430) certainly disavowed discriminate giving, perhaps in reaction to his own Manichean background: corporal works of mercy were forbidden to the Manichean elect,⁷³ and Manichean hearers were forbidden to give even bread or water to any beggar who was not a Manichean.⁷⁴

Gelasius (492–496), while described in *LP* as a “lover of the poor” who “delivered the city of Rome from danger of famine”, persecuted Manichees who were discovered in Rome, burning their books and ordering the persons to be deported into exile.⁷⁵ His attitude is reflected in a form letter sent to any city on the appointment of a new bishop, warning the bishop not to ordain Africans, because they have often proved to be Manichees, or to have been baptized twice.⁷⁶ This is especially interesting in light of Gelasius' own African background.⁷⁷ In a letter to the people of Brundisium, announcing the ordination of their new bishop, Julian, Gelasius informs them that Julian “will have to beware ordaining any *peregrini* or unknown persons or former penitents, because they are barred from the reverend offices”.⁷⁸

⁷² Theodoret, *Ep.* 113; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 3, p. 58. See discussion in Lieu, *Manicheism*, pp. 205–206.

⁷³ *De moribus* 1.27.54; NBA 13/1, p. 84; cf. A.D. Fitzgerald, “Mercy, Works of Mercy”, in ed. A.D. Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages. An Encyclopaedia* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), pp. 557–561, at p. 559.

⁷⁴ Augustine, *De moribus* 2.15.36; NBA 13/1, p. 156.

⁷⁵ Gelasius: *LP* 1, p. 255; *Ep.* 42.8; ed. Thiel, p. 467, proscribing the *opuscula* of Faustus the Manichean.

⁷⁶ *Ep.* 15.1; ed. Thiel, p. 379: ‘Afros passim ad ecclesiasticos ordines praetendentes nulla ratione suscipiat, quia aliqui eorum Manichaei, aliqui rebaptizati saepius sunt probati.’ Cf. Gregory I, *Reg.* 2.37, to which we refer below in n. 81.

⁷⁷ See discussion of the sources on this question in B. Neil, “The Letters of Gelasius I (492–496): A New Model of Crisis Management?” in ed. G. Dunn, *The Bishop of Rome in Late Antiquity* (forthcoming).

⁷⁸ *Ep.* 16.1; ed. Thiel, p. 381: ‘Quod etiam de peregrinis atque incognitis vel ex poenitentibus

Likewise Symmachus (498–514) found and exiled Manichees in Rome, after being accused by the emperor of converting from Manicheism himself. His *apologia* against this charge is the only evidence of his crusade against Manichees in Rome.⁷⁹ His successor Hormisdas (514–523) also investigated Manichees under torture and sent them into exile. *LP* explicitly links this persecution with the restoration of the catholic episcopate in North Africa after 74 years of Arian control (from 429).⁸⁰ Again there is no mention of Hormisdas taking action against Manichees in his c. 150 letters. After the Byzantine reconquest of North Africa and the restoration of catholicism there, the problem of Manicheans in general seems to have abated: no further bishops are recorded as encountering problems with them in Rome, although Gregory the Great continued to be wary, warning the bishops of Squillace not to ordain Africans in case they turned out to be Manicheans.⁸¹

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the letters surveyed in this chapter that bishops adopted different strategies to displacement of peoples, depending on what category of displaced person or persons they were dealing with, and whether they had a personal connection. The act of letter-writing was perhaps the best-documented of the limited range of strategies available to them. Exiled bishops like Theodoret engaged in frenzied correspondence from exile, offering pastoral care to their estranged flock and trying to keep their circles of influence alive. Strategies of bishops *in sede* included gifts of clothing and money, as well as letters and holy relics for the consolation of other exiled bishops. From the early fifth century in the eastern empire, and the end of that century in the West, bishops wrote letters of recommendation

cavere debent, quia huiusmodi a venerabilibus prohibentur officiis.' Thiel, p. 381 n. 3, notes Siricius' *Ep.* 6, with its vehement disapproval of some who have ordained transients and *peregrini*.

⁷⁹ *LP* 1, p. 261, ch. 5, on Symmachus' persecution of Manichees in Rome "after all this" ('post haec omnia'), meaning the rioting on the streets of Rome that followed his disputed election. In *Ep.* 10.6; ed. Thiel, p. 702, an *apologia* to Anastasius I written after 506, he avows that he was a convert from paganism, and had not deviated from the catholic faith (Anastasius I also disputed the legality of Symmachus' contested election). Cf. *Acts of the Roman Synod of 499* = Symmachus, *Ep.* 1; ed. Thiel, pp. 641–654.

⁸⁰ *LP* 1; p. 271, ch. 9.

⁸¹ Gregory I, *Reg.* 2.37; ed. Norberg, CCSL 140, pp. 121–122 (July 592).

on behalf of individuals, often in response to a personal appeal, and even, as we have seen, on behalf of Jews and slaves. Captives and prisoners of war were given ransom payments and gifts; letters of recommendation were written on behalf of those seeking to trace their lost relatives; and bishops themselves were charged with retrieving persons of importance from prison camps, as well as the care of prisoners. Asylum-seekers could be made secure by a letter from a bishop threatening excommunication to would-be violators of the sanctuary of the church, unless they were slaves, in which case they were likely to be sent packing. Refugees from barbarian invasions were welcomed in principle with material assistance of money, food and clothing, but risked persecution, torture and exile if they happened to be Manichean (at least in Rome). Generally speaking, the portfolio of an attested asylum-seeker included noble birth or ecclesiastical status, soundness of character, being of orthodox belief, having letters of introduction, and suffering a pathetic turn of events. If the refugee was a bishop in “voluntary exile”, he could expect to encounter physical dangers, frequent changes of location, constant surveillance and a lack of access to books or scribes. However, even under such difficult circumstances, a bishop like Severus of Antioch—thanks to his epistolary networks—could continue to administer his patriarchate through intermediaries until his death.

CASE-STUDIES OF EXILES, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Case-Study 1. *Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople (428–431)*⁸²

The Antiochene monk-presbyter Nestorius was consecrated patriarch of Constantinople in 428. His bitter christological and mariological disputes with Cyril of Alexandria and his deposition at the first Council of Ephesus on 22 June 431 are all too well known. A letter from Cyril gloats about the popular support that he enjoyed over his deposed enemy.⁸³ During the disputes with Cyril, Nestorius demonstrated an inability to manage the looming crisis, which after his deposition precipitated the Council of Chalcedon and eventually secured the separation of the Nestorian church. Nestorius was first permitted to return to his monastery outside Antioch, described by

⁸² On the controversial figure of Nestorius see Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, esp. pp. 16–19; Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 255–295 with lit.

⁸³ Cyril, *Ep.* 20 to the clergy and people of Alexandria; PG 77, 128D–129B.

Delmaire as an exile in the form of relegation,⁸⁴ but was then exiled successively and more severely to Petra in Arabia and to the Western Oasis (el-Kharga) in Egypt,⁸⁵ probably in a monastery which ironically was situated in the jurisdiction of his enemy, the patriarch of Alexandria.⁸⁶ It was ironical too that Nestorius came to live in the same region as another enemy, the founder of Coptic christology, Shenoute the Great. Indeed later legend has them coming face to face in Upper Egypt.⁸⁷ In his *Church History* Evagrius Scholasticus, who is also hostile to Nestorius, has preserved excerpts from two letters written from Nestorius' second place of exile, which turned out to be eventful and epic.⁸⁸ The letters, addressed to the controller (*hegoumenos*) of Thebes in Upper Egypt, reveal the critical situations in which the exile found himself. In the first instance the Oasis was devastated by the barbarian Blemmyes, who captured and killed inhabitants and torched the place. Some captives, like Nestorius, were treated well, released by the Blemmyes, and advised to flee the imminent attack of another barbarian tribe, the Mazici people. While other inhabitants of the Oasis liberated by the Blemmyes made their way back to their native towns from Panopolis, Nestorius, who had been exiled by imperial decree, wisely considered that he should report his whereabouts to the controller and to explain the circumstances

⁸⁴ "Exile, relégation, déportation", p. 119.

⁸⁵ On the nature of the location see J. Schwartz, "*In Oasin relegare*", in ed. R. Chevallier, *Mélanges d'histoire et d'archéologie offerts à André Piganiol* (Paris, 1966), vol. 3, pp. 1481–1488, who makes the point that it was only from the fifth century onward that the Great Oasis acquired its reputation as a ghastly location. Cf. G. Wagner, *Les oasis d'Égypte à l'époque grecque, romaine et byzantine d'après les documents grecs* (*Recherches de papyrologie et d'épigraphie grecques*), Bibliothèque d'études de l'IFAO 100 (Cairo, 1987), pp. 117–118, 126–127; M. Vallejo Girvés, "Locus horribilis? El destiarro en el Gran Oasis egipcio durante la Antigüedad Tardía", in eds. M. Khanoussi, P. Ruggieri, C. Vismara, *L'Africa romana. Atti del XV convegno di studio, Tozeur, 11–15 dicembre 2002* (Rome, 2004), vol. 3, pp. 691–698, esp. p. 691 n. 3 on other exiled persons there.

⁸⁶ Schwartz, "*In Oasin relegare*", pp. 1485–1486, points to the many Antiochene bishops who ended up in exile in the Great Oasis—almost a "tradition", he suggests.

⁸⁷ See Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 4: *The Church of Alexandria with Nubia and Ethiopia after 451* (London, Louisville, KY, 1996), pp. 207–213 = Eng. trans. by O.C. Dean of *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* 2/4, *Die Kirche von Alexandrien mit Nubien und Äthiopien nach 451* (Freiburg, 1990).

⁸⁸ *CPG* 5677, 5678 in Evagrius, *HE* 1.7; eds. J. Bidez, L. Parmentier, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius with the Scholia* (London, 1898; repr. Amsterdam, 1964), pp. 14, 25–16, 20. Trans. with annotations in M. Whitby, *The Ecclesiastical History of Evagrius*, TTH 33 (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 22–25. Cf. P. Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus the Church Historian*, *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, Études et Documents* 41 (Leuven, 1981), pp. 79–81. On Nestorius in exile see I. Milewski, "Miejsca zsytek biskupów wschodniorzeczymskich w IV i IV wieku", *Vox Patrum* 19 (1999), pp. 367–386 at pp. 380–381, 383.

of his departure from his place of exile, lest he be in further trouble.⁸⁹ One of his motives in so doing, he says, was to preclude future generations from alleging that “it is better to be a captive of barbarians than a fugitive from the Roman Empire”.⁹⁰ The controller was obviously not on the side of his supplicant, but may also have been uncertain how to ensure the safety of such a high-profile exile in hostile Egyptian territory. Nestorius was conveyed from Panopolis by barbarian soldiers to Elephantine, on the fringe of the eparchy of Thebes, where there was a military unit that could provide protection. Yet in Elephantine another injunction came from the controller that he was to return to Panopolis; on reaching that town, however, Nestorius was ordered to still another location within the territory of Panopolis. He records these events in his letter as follows:

While reckoning that these measures against us would come to a stop, and awaiting the decision concerning us of the gloriously victorious emperors, suddenly yet another command was mercilessly constructed for another exile for us, a fourth one.⁹¹

While Nestorius complains about the physical effects of his maltreatment, he lived for a considerable time in exile (431–c. 451).⁹² Evagrius criticises and scorns him for reviling both the emperor and the imperial officials, and considers the report that Nestorius’ tongue was eaten by worms before his death a just and apposite punishment for his blasphemy. Apart from the personal crisis experienced by the deposed bishop in his harsh exile, the church as a whole did not recover either immediately or in the long term from his deposition and banishment.⁹³

⁸⁹ On the legal implications of the abduction, captivity and liberation of the exiled Nestorius see Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 23 n. 72.

⁹⁰ Evagrius, *HE* 1.7; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, p. 15, 12–13. Trans. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 23.

⁹¹ Evagrius, *HE* 1.7; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, p. 16, 7–10. Trans. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 24.

⁹² See J.F. Bethune-Baker, “The Date of the Death of Nestorius: Shenoute, Zacharias, Evagrius”, *JTS* 9 (1908), pp. 601–605. Cf. the comments of Schwartz, “*In Oasin relegare*”, p. 1485, on the overly negative presentation of the Oasis in the ancient literature, especially from the fifth century onwards, cited above at n. 85.

⁹³ On this aspect of the Nestorian crisis see N.N. Seleznyov, “Nestorius of Constantinople. Condemnation, Suppression, Veneration with Special Reference to the Role of His Name in East-Syriac Christianity”, *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 62 (2010), pp. 165–190.

Case-Study 2. *Fulgentius, Bishop of Ruspe* (c. 468–533)⁹⁴

Less well known than Nestorius is Fulgentius of Ruspe from the province of Byzacena in North Africa, who was educated bilingually in Greek and Latin, becoming first tax-collector, then monk, priest and bishop. We have eighteen surviving letters from him (*CPL* 817), and a biography, perhaps composed by the Carthaginian deacon Ferrandus, as well as various other works from the bishop himself (*CPL* 814–835). Added to these are various *dubia et spuria* (*CPL* 836–846). Ordained bishop of Ruspe in about 507, Fulgentius was soon exiled with other catholic bishops to Sardinia in the ecclesiastical crisis caused by the Arian Vandal king, Thrasamund (c. 508/9), who wanted to stamp out the catholic hierarchy.⁹⁵ According to his hagiographer, Fulgentius lamented that he had to leave his church right from the beginning before having been able to instruct it, a common motif in the *Lives* of exiled bishops.⁹⁶ Before his exile, however, Fulgentius established a monastery in Ruspe, and lived there as a monk. On arrival in Sardinia via Carthage, he found between 60 and 200 bishops who had already been exiled from North Africa,⁹⁷ and, although he was the newest arrival and quite junior, according to his biographer he quickly assumed a leadership role in the expatriate community, being commissioned to write pastoral and dogmatic letters in the name of the other bishops to the churches and faithful back in Byzacena.⁹⁸ A couple of these survive and will be discussed below. In Cagliari Fulgentius was eventually able to found a makeshift monastery of bishops, clergy and monks before he was ordered by Thrasamund to return to Carthage for discussions on contentious theological points (c. 516/7). Fulgentius remained in Carthage for about two years to discuss the truth of catholic teaching over against the Arian position, and during this time

⁹⁴ On Fulgentius see the old but still standard biography of G.-G. Lapeyre, *Saint Fulgence de Ruspe. Un évêque catholique africain sous la domination vandale* (Paris, 1929), esp. pp. 145–171 on the circumstances of the periods of exile; H.-J. Diesner, *Fulgentius von Ruspe als Theologe und Kirchenpolitiker*, Arbeiten zur Theologie 26 (Stuttgart, 1966); C. Tibiletti, “Polemiche in Africa contro i teologi provenzali”, *Augustinianum* 26 (1986), pp. 499–517.

⁹⁵ See Lapeyre, *Saint Fulgence*, pp. 156–159. On the punishment of exile to islands see Delmaire, “Exile, relégation, déportation”, p. 120.

⁹⁶ *Vita Fulgentii*, ch. 17; ed. G.-G. Lapeyre, *Vie de Saint Fulgence de Ruspe de Ferrand, diacre de Carthage* (Paris, 1929), p. 87. Trans. R.B. Eno, *Fulgentius. Selected Works*, FOTC 95 (Washington, DC, 1997), pp. 1–56, here p. 35.

⁹⁷ On the disparity of the numbers of these exiled bishops in the sources see Lapeyre, *Saint Fulgence*, p. 157 with n. 2.

⁹⁸ *Vita Fulgentii*, chs. 17–18; ed. Lapeyre, pp. 87–93.

composed two works in refutation of the Vandal king's position.⁹⁹ The outcomes of these conversations were negative, however, and once again Fulgentius was exiled to Sardinia (518/9), where he remained until 523. In chapter 25 of the *Vita Fulgentii* we are given a catalogue of works composed by Fulgentius during this second exile, several of which are lost. He wrote letters to people in Sardinia, Africa and Rome, and composed works on predestination, grace, and the semi-Pelagian position on these matters. When in 523 Thrasamund died and was replaced as Vandal king by the more favourably inclined Hilderic, the exiled catholic bishops and others in Sardinia were allowed to return to Africa, where Fulgentius composed other works. From his period of exile, whether the first or the second, we have at least two letters, numbers 15 and 17, written in the name of the bishops in Sardinia.¹⁰⁰ The first of these addresses the question of human free will and divine grace, as if there are those who deny the doctrine of grace as understood by Fulgentius. It appears as if this dogmatic letter, to some extent at least, is associated with the crisis posed by the semi-Pelagian controversy, in which Fulgentius supported the position of Augustine of Hippo.¹⁰¹ Letter 17, addressed to Peter the deacon and others in response to Letter 16, is preserved in the collection of Fulgentius' letters and deals with the doctrines of Greek writers on christological and trinitarian questions, clearly a response by the bilingual Fulgentius to the crises in the East after the Council of Chalcedon. The theme of predestination is also present in this letter. It is clear from one of Fulgentius' last letters, written in 532, that he had been called upon by others to advise on eastern disputes, here the apthartodocetist doctrine of Julian of Halicarnassus that caused a major crisis in both the Chalcedonian and anti-Chalcedonian parties from the second decade of the sixth century until at least the death of Justinian in 565.¹⁰²

Even in exile Fulgentius was a pivotal figure, like Severus of Antioch, whom people called upon for theological and pastoral advice in a time of crisis, notwithstanding the fact that the exiles themselves were living in a state of crisis.

⁹⁹ These are *Dicta regis Trasamundi et contra eius responsiones* (seu *Contra Arianos*) (CPL 815), *Ad Trasamundum regem* 1, in three books (CPL 816); ed. J. Fraipont, *Opera*, CCSL 91 (Turnhout, 1968), pp. 67–94 and 95–185 respectively.

¹⁰⁰ CCSL 91A, pp. 447–457, 563–615.

¹⁰¹ See further Tibiletti, "Polemiche in Africa", with lit. on Fulgentius' allegiance to Augustine's views.

¹⁰² *Ep. 18 ad Reginum* (cf. CPL 817); CCSL 91A, pp. 619–624. On the doctrine of Julian see Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 79–111.

Case-Study 3. *Vigilius of Rome (531–555)*¹⁰³

Much of the episcopal career of the hapless Vigilius took place in the context of the Three Chapters controversy,¹⁰⁴ not surprisingly a significant detail left in abeyance by the author of the *Liber Pontificalis*. Let us summarize the background to this controversy briefly: Theodore of Mopsuestia and certain writings of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Ibas of Edessa (the Three Chapters) had been endorsed at the Council of Chalcedon, but were rejected by the anti-Chalcedonians as being unorthodox and therefore as calling the orthodoxy of the Council itself into question. In his attempts to effect ecclesiastical unity, Emperor Justinian issued an edict in 544/5 condemning the Three Chapters, which was seen by the supporters of the Council, particularly in the West, as a betrayal. We cannot speak absolutely of Vigilius' "exile", in the sense that it is not certain whether he was abducted from Rome to Constantinople or went willingly to the eastern capital at imperial behest to deal with the critical theological situation there.¹⁰⁵ In any case it is an unusual "exile", "relegation", or "extradition", for the bishop of Rome was forced one way or another to remain expatriated in Constantinople from 547 until 554 under imperial pressure to accede to the condemnation of the Three Chapters.

The details of Vigilius' sojourn in the eastern capital and his continuous vacillations make pathetic reading. Although he had been warned by bishops and clergy in Sardinia, Africa and Rome not to condemn the Three Chapters, on his arrival in Constantinople he excommunicated Patriarch Menas and all those who had signed the edict of 544/5. Empress Theodora

¹⁰³ Definitive on Vigilius is C. Sotinel, *EDP*, 1, s.v. Vigilio, pp. 512–529. See also J. Richards, *The Pope and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476–752* (London, 1979), pp. 125, 129–133, 141–160. Cf. C. Sotinel, "The Three Chapters, the Transformations of Italy", in eds. C. Chazelle, C. Cubitt, *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 14 (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 85–120 with lit. See R.B. Eno, "Papal Damage Control in the Aftermath of the Three Chapters Controversy", *StP* 19 (1989), pp. 52–56 on the fall-out on the papacy after Vigilius' vacillating performances in Constantinople. See further Chapter 5, "Review of Sixth-Century Christological Disputes", *infra*.

¹⁰⁴ For an overview of the controversy see R.A. Markus, C. Sotinel, "Introduction", and "Epilogue", in eds. Chazelle, Cubitt, *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*, pp. 1–14, 265–278. The two letters purportedly written by Vigilius quoted by the Africans Victor of Tunnuna (*Chron.* ad a. 542), and Liberatus (*Brev.* 22), in which the pontiff supposedly agreed with anti-Chalcedonian sentiments, need to be discounted, *pace* Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, p. 276 n. 2. See Sotinel, *EDP*, 1, s.v. Vigilio, p. 514. The anti-Vigilius bias of the African church would explain these dubious pieces.

¹⁰⁵ See Markus, Sotinel, "Introduction", in eds. Chazelle, Cubitt, *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*, pp. 3–4.

was, however, able to reconcile the two patriarchs to each other. In mid-547 Vigilius condemned the Three Chapters in letters written to the imperial couple,¹⁰⁶ before embarking on what was to have been a definitive statement on the controversy, the so-called *Iudicatum* of 11 April 548, a balancing act between condemning the Chapters and recognising Chalcedon.¹⁰⁷ When this document met with serious opposition in the West, particularly in Africa where the pope was excommunicated, Vigilius was forced to retract it and to swear his allegiance to Justinian in condemning the Three Chapters in the same sense as the emperor had done.¹⁰⁸ The next document that informs us about Vigilius' sojourn in Constantinople is a letter apparently from the bishops of Milan¹⁰⁹ to the Frankish envoys *en route* to the eastern capital. It is staunchly pro-Vigilius. The authors claim that the pope was more or less violently brought to Constantinople and that after six years of being harassed by the emperor had to take flight to the Church of St Peter in the company of Bishop Datius of Milan. After several months the two were viciously attacked by a praetor and a large number of soldiers, who tried to drag Vigilius away by his hair, beard and feet as he clung to the altar in the gesture of an asylum-seeker. When the altar collapsed, the attackers fled in panic. Some weeks later Vigilius wrote an encyclical letter from his next place of asylum, the church of St Euphemia in Chalcedon.¹¹⁰ The pope explains that when the general Belisarius and other high officials came to the church to tell him to return to the city, he replied:

We took refuge in this basilica with neither a financial nor a personal motive, but solely because of a cause of offence in the church that has already, for our sins, become notorious throughout the world.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ ACO 4/1, pp. 187–188; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, vol. 2, pp. 79–81.

¹⁰⁷ ACO 4/1, pp. 11, 12–12, 6.

¹⁰⁸ See further Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 426–427.

¹⁰⁹ Although the letter (CPL 1697) is entitled *Epistula clericorum Mediolanensium ad legatos Francorum, qui Constantinopolim proficiscebatur*, it is considered by Sotinel, "The Three Chapters Controversy", in eds. Chazelle, Cubitt, *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*, pp. 85–120 at p. 92, to be the product of a Milanese synod. This is followed by Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, p. 160. Text in E. Schwartz, *Vigiliusbrieft*, in *Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-Hist. Abt. 1940/2 (Munich, 1940), pp. 18–25; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, pp. 165–170, who dates the document to before 23 December 551.

¹¹⁰ Text in Schwartz, *Vigiliusbrieft*, pp. 1–10; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, pp. 170–179, dated in the letter itself to 5 February 552.

¹¹¹ Schwartz, *Vigiliusbrieft*, p. 1; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, p. 171.

Vigilius recounts the maltreatment he received at the hands of the praetor and his soldiers in the Church of St Peter and appends a profession of faith. The *LP* records dramatically and somewhat improbably that “they dragged him through the whole city until nightfall, then cast him into prison, giving him amounts of bread and water”, adding that Vigilius’ clergy “who were with him were sent into exile to work in various mines”.¹¹²

Meanwhile planning was in hand for the ecumenical council that Justinian hoped would resolve the controversy around the Three Chapters and other issues, principally Origenist doctrines. Neither emperor nor pope attended the Fifth Ecumenical Council when it was convened in Constantinople from 5 May to 2 June 533. The assembly of eastern bishops condemned the Three Chapters and all who supported them, at the same time removing Vigilius’ name from the diptychs. However, in the next communication from the expatriate pope and the western bishops, his *Constitutum I*, dated 14 May 553¹¹³ and addressed to Justinian, Vigilius agrees that passages from Theodore of Mopsuestia, sixty of which are cited at length, are heretical, but maintains that the person of Theodore should not be condemned. Vigilius also defends Theodoret and Mari the Persian, concluding that no ecclesiastic should contravene what he has written.¹¹⁴ As Price perceives, “there were only two ways in which the impasse could now be resolved—either by the formal trial and deposition of Vigilius or by his capitulation”.¹¹⁵ In the event, on 8 December 553 the pope wrote his second letter to Eutychius, patriarch of Constantinople, condemning the Three Chapters.¹¹⁶ The emperor being unsatisfied with this manifesto, Vigilius wrote his *Constitutum II*, dated 23 February 554, also known as *Aetius* because it is acephalous, being read out at the Council of 553 (minus its preamble) by Aetius, archdea-

¹¹² *LP* 1, p. 298: ‘et trahentes eum per totam civitatem usque ad vesperam. Tunc missus in custodia; dabantur ei modice panis et aqua. Clerus autem Romanus qui cum eo erant missi in exilio per diversa metalla incidenda.’ Trans. Davis, p. 58. On exile to the mines (‘ad metalla’) see Delmaire, “Exil, relégation, déportation”, pp. 115–116.

¹¹³ Ed. O. Guenther, *Epistolae imperatorum pontificum aliorum inde ab a. CCCLXVII usque ad a. DLIII datae Avellana quae dicitur collectio*, CSEL 35 (Prague, 1895), pp. 230–320; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, vol. 2, pp. 145–218.

¹¹⁴ Ed. Guenther, CSEL 35, p. 305; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, p. 211.

¹¹⁵ *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, p. 214.

¹¹⁶ This letter is known as *Scandala*; ed. ACO 4/1, pp. 245–247; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, pp. 215–218. The authenticity of this piece, together with that of *Constitutum II*, also known as *Aetius* (see further below), was long denied. Grillmeier *CCT* 2, part 2, p. 442, has the details. E. Zettl, *Die Bestätigung des V. Ökumenischen Konzils durch Papst Vigilius. Untersuchungen über die Echtheit der Briefe Scandala und Aetius* (JK.936.937) (Bonn, 1974), resolved the debate in the affirmative.

con of Constantinople.¹¹⁷ In this document Vigilius accepts the condemnation of the Three Chapters. So concludes the unedifying seven-year “exile” of Vigilius in Constantinople, from where he was repatriated to Rome only to die along the way.

Case-Study 4. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus* (423–c. 466)¹¹⁸

The letters of Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus to the east of Antioch in the third and fourth decades of the fifth century, contain various examples of a bishop assisting asylum-seekers and refugees.¹¹⁹ The invasion of North Africa by the Vandals in 429, the year before the death of Augustine of Hippo, sent shock waves throughout the Mediterranean world. Carthage fell on 19 October 439. A huge displacement of peoples followed these crises, including many refugees from Greek-speaking Libya who sought asylum in Syria. The pitiful cases of some of these people, together with Latin-speakers or bilinguals, are documented in Theodoret’s letters. How did a bishop like Theodoret try to manage a crisis that originated far away and was not of his own making? Like immigration officials today, he first had to verify the authenticity of the refugees’ stories. When satisfied with this, he could assist by writing letters of recommendation¹²⁰ or safe passage. The twelve letters he composed in

¹¹⁷ Text in ACO 4/2, pp. 138–168; trans. Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, pp. 221–269.

¹¹⁸ The following two case-studies contain expanded, refocused material from Neil, Allen, “Displaced Peoples”, pp. 38–41.

¹¹⁹ On Theodoret in general see T. Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus. The Bishop and the Holy Man* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2002). On the letters see M. Wagner, “A Chapter in Byzantine Epistolography: The Letters of Theodoret of Cyrus”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 4 (1948), pp. 121–179; C. Spadavecchia, “The Rhetorical Tradition in the Letters of Theodoret of Cyrus”, in ed. V. Vavřínek, *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium*. Proceedings of the Byzantinological Symposium in the 16th International Eirene Conference (Prague, 1985), pp. 249–252; I.G. Tomkins, “The Relations between Theodoret of Cyrrhus and His City and Its Territory, with Particular Reference to the Letters and *Historia Religiosa*”, DPhil diss., Oxford, 1993; idem, “Problems of Dating and Pertinence in Some Letters of Theodoret of Cyrrhus”, *Byzantion* 65 (1995), pp. 176–195; P. Allen, “The Syrian Church through Bishops’ Eyes: The Letters of Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Severus of Antioch”, *StP* 42 (2006), pp. 3–21; A.M. Schor, *Theodoret’s People: Social Networks and Religious Conflict in Late Roman Syria*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 48 (Los Angeles, 2011). A translation of Theodoret’s letters by Thomas Halton is forthcoming, in the Library of Early Christianity series (Washington DC, Catholic University of America Press).

¹²⁰ On letters of recommendation in antiquity see in general C.-H. Kim, *Form and Structure of the Familiar Greek Letter of Recommendation*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 4 (Missoula, MT, 1972); S. Roda, “Polifunzionalità della lettera commendaticia: Teoria e prassi nell’epistolario Simmachiano”, in ed. F. Paschoud, *Colloque Genevois sur Symmache sur l’occasion du mille six centième anniversaire du conflit de l’autel de la Victoire* (Paris, 1986),

recommendation of three asylum-seekers give us a unique window onto the plight of these (admittedly well-off and/or highly placed) displaced persons, as well as an idea of how the advocacy process for asylum-seekers worked in Late Antiquity. To be noted here is Theodoret's *modus operandi*: to the eminent persons to whom he writes his recommendation he couches his support of the displaced persons who have sought his protection and assistance in quite different terms, depending on their status and religion. However, in all cases his support comes across as unequivocal.

In the case of the well-born asylum-seeker, Maximian, perhaps a member of a senatorial family, who "was unable to recount the tragedy of his hardships without piercing the hearts of his hearers and making them shed tears", Theodoret had a letter from Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem (422–458) vouching for the veracity of Maximian's story,¹²¹ indicating perhaps that the asylum-seeker, on escaping from Libya, had gone first to Palestine.¹²² On the basis of Juvenal's letter of recommendation Theodoret in his turn was able to write between 439 and 443 to the pagan sophist, Aërius,¹²³ asking him to take care of Maximian, in the expectation that his friend's willingness to help an asylum-seeker would transcend religious boundaries. Theodoret compares the campaign in Sicily during the Peloponnesian war, related by Thucydides, with what has befallen Libya and Carthage in the wake of the Vandal invasions, and requests Aërius to provide Maximian with the "hospitality of Alcinoos", as in Homer's *Odyssey*. Here we see the network process in action,¹²⁴ with the bishop of Cyrrhus customizing his request to suit the pagan recipient.

Sometimes the refugees arrived from Vandal North Africa in Syria as a family unit, as in the case of Celestiacus, a formerly wealthy *curialis* from Carthage, who escaped from the Vandals with his wife, children and house-

pp. 177–207; H. Cotton, *Documentary Letters of Recommendation in Latin from the Roman Empire*, Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie 132 (Königstein/Ts, 1991).

¹²¹ *Ep.* XXIII (XXII); ed., trans. Y. Azéma, *Théodoret de Cyr. Correspondance*, vol. 1, SC 40bis (Paris, 1982), p. 94. On Juvenal see E. Honigmann, "Juvenal of Jerusalem", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950), pp. 209–279. On Maximian see *PLRE* 2, s.v. Maximian 4, p. 739.

¹²² We might postulate that the route followed by Melania the Younger from Thagaste to Jerusalem via Alexandria was a usual one from North Africa to the East. See *Vita Melaniae* 34–35; ed., trans. D. Gorce, *Vie de Sainte Mélanie*, SC 90 (Paris, 1962), pp. 191–195.

¹²³ On Aërius see *PLRE* 2, pp. 17–18, where he is said to be a native of Cyrrhus but not to live there.

¹²⁴ A.M. Schor's article, "Theodoret on the 'School of Antioch': A Network Approach", *JECS* 15 (2007), pp. 517–562, despite its promising title, deals basically not with the letters but with Theodoret's *HE*.

hold members, including servants.¹²⁵ Since Carthage was predominantly Latin-speaking, it may be wondered whether Celestiacus was bilingual or learned Greek on the run. Using his well-developed networks,¹²⁶ Theodoret wrote no fewer than eight letters of recommendation on Celestiacus' behalf. The first of these, composed between 439 and 443, is to a high functionary Apellio, presumably resident in the East and known only from this letter.¹²⁷ Theodoret begins by saying that the suffering experienced by the Carthaginians calls for a drama by Aeschylus or Sophocles, but in fact possibly surpasses their dramatic gifts. Appealing to Apellio as representative of the imperial government, the bishop points out that the city of Carthage, which the Roman empire had fought to secure, has become the toy of barbarians. In the face of the fragility of human affairs, says Theodoret, Celestiacus has borne his troubles bravely and deserves the assistance of Apellio—may the latter receive him hospitably in the manner of Abraham (cf. Gen 18:108). The second letter of recommendation on behalf of Celestiacus is addressed to the same pagan sophist Aërius to whom Theodoret had earlier appealed on behalf of Maximian.¹²⁸ Here Theodoret appeals to Aërius' higher learning and virtue and that of the school he leads. The sophist will be well aware of the fickleness of fate: when he was affluent in Carthage, Celestiacus opened his doors to strangers, never thinking that one day he himself would have to throw himself on the mercy of strangers. Theodoret urges Aërius and his school to rival the hospitality of Alcinoos in receiving and assisting the noble asylum-seeker. The next two letters in support of Celestiacus and his family are to Bishop Domnus of Antioch (441/2–449)¹²⁹ and Bishop Theoctistus of Beroea in Syria Prima, west of Antioch and south of Cyrrhus.¹³⁰ To Domnus, Theodoret commends Celestiacus and his family, urging his fellow-bishop to provide him a native land on foreign soil, and to force those who are rich to help out someone who is of the same rank as themselves. To Theoctistus, Theodoret writes that the aristocratic asylum-seeker had come to him in Cyrrhus with letters attesting to the privileged

¹²⁵ On this asylum-seeker see *PLRE* 2, pp. 278–279 (evidence only on the basis of Theodoret's letters).

¹²⁶ On which see particularly Schor, *Theodoret's People*, pp. 19–130.

¹²⁷ *Ep.* 29; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 87–89. On Apellio see *PLRE* 2, p. 109.

¹²⁸ *Ep.* 30; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 86–89.

¹²⁹ *Ep.* 31; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 90–93.

¹³⁰ *Ep.* 32; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 92–95. On Theoctistus see Azéma, vol. 1, p. 34; G. Fedalto, *Hierarchia Ecclesiastica Orientalis*, vol. 2, *Patriarchatus Alexandrinus, Antiochenus, Hierosolymitanus* (Padua, 1988), p. 693.

class he had belonged to in Carthage. Over and above these recommendations Theodoret was able to observe and approve Celestiacus' conduct in person during the days he spent in Cyrrhus.¹³¹ The bishop of Cyrrhus petitions his fellow-bishop to take care of the *curialis*, who was once the ornament of the metropolitan city of Africa but now has neither city nor house, not to mention the necessities of life. If the poor city of Cyrrhus can offer solace to Celestiacus, so runs Theodoret's argument, it is much more incumbent on the city of Beroea to do the same. Elsewhere the bishop of Cyrrhus bemoans the poverty of his see;¹³² we may surmise that aiding a formerly wealthy *curialis* and his entire household in their asylum would have been an expensive exercise, one that Theodoret was obliged, even eager, to share around. This will be corroborated by the contents of *Letter* 36 below.

The next two letters in Theodoret's collection are addressed to imperial officials. *Letter* 33 to Stasimus, *comes* and *proteuon*,¹³³ opens in a similar vein to *Letter* 29, stating that it would need the language of the dramatists to express the plight of Celestiacus, who has been deprived of city, native land and riches. Such a plight, warns Theodoret, could easily befall others, and he urges Stasimus to introduce Celestiacus to people in public office and to rich citizens in his circle, in order to achieve divine blessing for himself. The following letter was sent to *comes* Patricius in c. 443.¹³⁴ Singling out generosity as the chief virtue of the *comes*, Theodoret explains the good grace with which Celestiacus has accepted his lot and asks Patricius to introduce the asylum-seeker to others who will also be generous to him.

Letters 35 and 36 were sent respectively to Irenaeus, metropolitan bishop of the port city of Tyre (c. 445–448),¹³⁵ and Bishop Pompeianus of Emesa, an inland town in Phoenicia Secunda.¹³⁶ As he did with Patricius, Theodoret singles out Irenaeus' generosity as the virtue that impels him to approach him on Celestiacus' behalf. As in previous letters too he invokes the fickleness of fate that has reduced a mega-wealthy man to wandering about in a foreign land looking for support, and asks Irenaeus to introduce Celestiacus

¹³¹ *Ep.* 35; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 96–99.

¹³² See e.g. *Ep.* 42; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 106–113.

¹³³ Ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 94–97. On Stasimus, who was probably retired, see *PLRE* 2, p. 1028. The letter was composed between 439 and 443.

¹³⁴ According to *PLRE* 2, p. 838, s.v. Patricius 6, there is no suggestion that Patricius was *comes Orientis*.

¹³⁵ Ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 96–99. On Irenaeus, a former *comes Orientis*, see *PLRE* 2, p. 624, s.v. Irenaeus 2.

¹³⁶ Ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 98–101. On the bishop himself see Fedalto, *Hierarchia*, vol. 2, p. 736.

to the rich in his city so that the latter may support his wife, children and servants. In his appeal to Pompeianus for support Theodoret mentions that the paucity of the resources of the see of Emesa will be overcome by its bishop's generosity, such that in his radically reduced circumstances the noble Celestiacus and his household will be assisted by the richest among the citizens of Emesa. Again it seems as if the plight of Celestiacus is being shared around; there is no talk of returning him to his homeland or arranging safe passage.

Two letters survive which Theodoret wrote to Bishop Ibas of Edessa¹³⁷ and Ibas' cousin, Bishop Sophronius of Constantina in Osrohene (under the aegis of the metropolitan of Edessa), on behalf of the Libyan bishop Cyprian.¹³⁸ This ecclesiastic, having escaped the Vandals, made his way to Galatia, the territory around modern-day Ankara in Turkey. Eusebius, a bishop of Galatia and a friend of Theodoret, had given Cyprian a letter of recommendation, which he showed to Theodoret.¹³⁹ The bishop of Cyrrhus in his turn asks Sophronius to write a letter of recommendation for Cyprian, enabling him to travel further to other ports,¹⁴⁰ presumably with a view of returning to Libya. It is unclear why Cyprian has to travel so far inland in order to return by sea to his native land.

Our final example of Theodoret's crisis management in the face of population displacement concerns the well-born Libyan girl, Maria, who, while fleeing the Vandals, was captured and enslaved by them.¹⁴¹ Some traders who had bought her from the barbarians on-sold Maria and her servant-girl to Syrians, but she was ransomed by some good-hearted soldiers who heard of her noble birth and were impressed with the demeanour of her servant. When she arrived in Cyrrhus, Theodoret was absent, but on his return he heard about the whole episode and confided Maria to the care of a deacon. Ten months later, when she was told that her father was alive and living in the West, Maria asked Theodoret for a letter of recommendation to the bishop of the port city of Aigiai on her homeward journey. (Perhaps this was also the escape route that Bishop Cyprian availed himself of.) This

¹³⁷ On Ibas and his works see G.G. Blum, *Rabbula von Edessa, der Christ, der Bischof, der Theologe*, CSCO, Subsidia 34 (Louvain, 1969), pp. 196–203; C. Rammelt, *Ibas von Edessa. Rekonstruktion einer Biographie und dogmatischen Position zwischen den Fronten*, Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte 106 (Berlin, New York, 2008).

¹³⁸ *Epp.* 52 and 53; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 128–131 and 130–131, respectively. On Sophronius (c. 445–451) see Fedalto, *Hierarchia*, vol. 2, p. 814.

¹³⁹ *Ep.* 52; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 130–131.

¹⁴⁰ *Ep.* 53; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 130–131.

¹⁴¹ On Maria see *PLRE* 2, s.v. Maria 2, pp. 720–721; on her father Eudaimon, see *PLRE* 2, p. 406, s.v. Eudaimon 3.

Theodoret did, explaining that the time was opportune because of a fair in that city where many sea-faring merchants would be present,¹⁴² and asking Bishop Eustathius to put her into the care of sailors, pilots and traders who would take her home safely.¹⁴³

We observe that all of the displaced persons immortalized in Theodoret's correspondence were either rich (or formerly so), aristocratic, or well-placed in the church. Thus they had access to sophisticated and powerful social networks. In this crisis we do not find the bishop interceding for "little people", presumably because they did not have enough money to escape from Africa in the first place.

Case-Study 5. *Severus of Antioch (512–518)*

Let us turn now to Severus, patriarch of Antioch in Syria from 512–518, who departed from his see in 518 after the restoration of Chalcedon by Justin I in 518.¹⁴⁴ The sources are not clear on the immediate reason for Severus' hasty departure from Antioch: he was summoned to Constantinople to be tried for heresy or to have his tongue cut out.¹⁴⁵ However, before a sentence of exile could be imposed upon him he was able to take ship for Alexandria on 29 September 518,¹⁴⁶ and thus began his life as a refugee and asylum-seeker. No fewer than 55 bishops were expelled from the Antiochene patriarchate in the next years,¹⁴⁷ many of them, like Severus, seeking refuge in anti-Chalcedonian Egypt from imperial hostility and persecution. For the next twenty years until his death in 538, Severus lived in hiding in Egypt, although he still administered his flock continuously by letter. These people were

¹⁴² On the function and opportunities of fairs in antiquity see L. de Ligt, *Fairs and Markets in the Roman Empire. Economic and Social Aspects of Periodic Trade in a Pre-Industrial Society* (Amsterdam, 1993), pp. 70–75, 126–128.

¹⁴³ *Ep.* 70; ed., trans. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 152–155.

¹⁴⁴ On the Chalcedonian restoration see Menze, *Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*. On Severus the classic work is that of J. Lebon, *Le monophysisme sévérien. Étude historique, littéraire et théologique* (Louvain, 1909; repr. New York, 1978), revised in "La christologie du monophysisme sévérien", in eds. Grillmeier, Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. 1, pp. 425–580; Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*; Alpi, *La Route royale*. The letters of Severus, almost all of which survive in Syriac translations, are found in ed., trans. Brooks, *Select Letters*; idem, *A Collection of Letters of Severus of Antioch*. For incidental letters outside these collections see Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, p. 186.

¹⁴⁵ On the details see Honigsmann, *Évêques et évêchés*, pp. 142–143.

¹⁴⁶ See J. Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie depuis la mort de l'empereur Anastase jusqu'à la réconciliation des églises jacobites (518–646)*, Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études 237 (Paris, 1923), pp. 70–71.

¹⁴⁷ See Honigsmann, *Évêques et évêchés*, p. 87.

mostly monks, nuns and clergy who had been displaced and sought asylum in eastern Syria and Arabia—in other words, they were the victims of mass dispersion caused by ecclesiastical crises. Himself a victim of these crises, Severus tells us that nobody knew where he was living except those who brought him the necessities of life;¹⁴⁸ he was forever on the move, sometimes changing his abode when some news reached him;¹⁴⁹ and even for those who did know where he was, access appears to have been possible only through certain officials.¹⁵⁰ Despite his isolation, however, the sophisticated networks which he had established even before his patriarchate ensured that he was kept informed of events and that he could be reached by letter.

During his patriarchate itself (512–518), Severus had had to struggle with low numbers of committed anti-Chalcedonian clergy; in his long asylum his concern must have been that the religious crises of the time prevented his displaced people in the diaspora from having canonically ordained priests or bishops. The persecutions waged against his people by subsequent Chalcedonian patriarchs of Antioch would have exacerbated the crisis.¹⁵¹ Apart from encouraging his flock and urging them to maintain their opposition to the Council of Chalcedon, Severus had a further strategy in his crisis management, namely writing polemical works against the Chalcedonians. One of these enemies was John the Grammarian. Severus' work against the neo-Chalcedonian stance of John was not published until 519,¹⁵² when Severus was already in refuge, and he explains that he was forced to compose the introduction to the work in such a way that it looked as if he was still patriarch of Antioch, not a condemned non-person writing from his place of asylum.¹⁵³ In the following passage from a letter, Severus describes the difficulties of implementing this strategy without access to a library but also its importance for overturning what had been done at the Council of 451:

It was a very difficult task and needed a great store of books, and it was so to speak difficult for me to correct, because I am moving from place to place, and I have not everywhere at hand fitting testimonies and demonstrations from the Scriptures. For I thought it right to meet not only the lamentable

¹⁴⁸ *Select Letters* 5.12; Brooks, vol. 1 (text), pp. 382–383; vol. 2 (trans.), p. 339.

¹⁴⁹ *Select Letters* 5.12; Brooks, vol. 1 (text), p. 384; vol. 2 (trans.), p. 341.

¹⁵⁰ *Select Letters* 8.5; Brooks, vol. 1 (text), p. 469; vol. 2 (trans.), p. 415.

¹⁵¹ See Allen, "Episcopal Succession in Antioch", in eds. Leemans et al., *Episcopal Elections*, p. 28.

¹⁵² See *Severi Antiocheni liber contra impium Grammaticum*; ed., trans. J. Lebon, CSCO 93 (text), 94 (trans.) (Louvain, 1933); CSCO 101 (text), 102 (trans.) (Louvain, 1938).

¹⁵³ *Ep.* 34; ed., trans. Brooks, PO 12/2, p. 276.

babbblings of the grammarian, but also the whole web of impiety contained in what was defined and done by way of innovation at Chalcedon ...¹⁵⁴

This is an example of the itinerant episcopal asylum-seeker using written propaganda to strengthen his case. The same holds true for Severus' polemical works against the exaggerated anti-Chalcedonian Sergius,¹⁵⁵ which he was able to complete only from Egypt, and his engagement with his fellow-asylum-seeker, Julian, bishop of Halicarnassus.¹⁵⁶

We have various examples of Severus' letters of consolation written from his asylum. In one case he writes to the anti-Chalcedonian monks of the East who were driven by imperial force from their monasteries after 520, two years after Severus himself went into hiding in Egypt.¹⁵⁷ He tries to console and instruct them at the same time. To the female monastics, also forced to flee, he writes:

Sustain yourselves on the hope of the future life, and look for a reward to be added to the now existing troubles, and ask the God of all not to allow us to be tried beyond what we can bear, but with the trial to give also a way of escape, that we may be able to endure.¹⁵⁸

Elsewhere in his letters from banishment he relates to John and John, his two *locum tenentes* in Antioch, the persecution and expulsion of anti-Chalcedonians in Isauria, including monks, clergy and laypeople.¹⁵⁹ He remarks that "a time of persecution more particularly invites us to be more than ordinarily mild, and to gather together the scattered limbs of the church, and to block the exits of their unreasonable schisms".¹⁶⁰

Like Nestorius' long sojourn in the Great Oasis, Severus' protracted asylum in various places in Egypt was eventful. On Justinian's accession in 527 the new emperor made it his policy to try to reconcile supporters and oppo-

¹⁵⁴ *Ep.* 34; ed. Brooks, PO 12/2, p. 276. Cf. Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, pp. 26–27.

¹⁵⁵ *Epistulae mutuae*; ed., trans. J. Lebon, CSCO 119 (text), 120 (trans.) (Louvain, 1949); ed., trans., I.R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon: Severus of Antioch and Sergius the Monophysite* (Norwich, 1988); repr. as *The Correspondence of Severus and Sergius*, Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 11 (Piscataway, NJ, 2011).

¹⁵⁶ See R. Hespel, ed., trans., *Sévère d'Antioche. La polémique antijulianiste* 1, CSCO 244/245 (Louvain, 1964); 2A, CSCO 295/296 (Louvain, 1968); 2B, CSCO 301/302 (Louvain, 1969); 3, CSCO 318/319 (Louvain, 1971). On Julian see R. Dragnet, *Julien d'Halicarnasse et sa controverse avec Sévère d'Antioche sur l'incorruptibilité du corps du Christ* (Louvain, 1924), pp. 4–9; Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 79–128.

¹⁵⁷ *Ep.* 35; PO 12/2, pp. 279–290; trans. Brooks.

¹⁵⁸ *Ep.* 61; PO 12/2, pp. 340–342 at p. 342; trans. Brooks.

¹⁵⁹ *Select Letters* 1.52; Brooks, vol. 1 (text), p. 165; vol. 2 (trans.), p. 149.

¹⁶⁰ *Select Letters* 1.53; Brooks, vol. 1 (text), p. 170; vol. 2 (trans.), p. 153.

nents of Chalcedon. By c. 530 persecution of anti-Chalcedonians had ceased and Justinian was planning “conversations” between the two rival groups, each being represented by six bishops. Because the emperor realized that the presence of Severus was essential for the success of the talks, he was invited to go to Constantinople, but in a letter he declined on grounds of age.¹⁶¹ The “conversations”, which took place in Constantinople in 532, were inconclusive.¹⁶² Finally in 534 or 535¹⁶³ Severus did go to Constantinople, where he was welcomed by Empress Theodora, who was sympathetic to non-Chalcedonians. However, it was only a matter of time before the Chalcedonian alliance between Emperor Justinian and Pope Agapitus asserted its ascendancy, and in May–June 536 Severus was condemned by the Home Synod. This decision was ratified by an imperial edict later in the same year, banishing Severus and condemning his works to the flames.¹⁶⁴ With Theodora’s help Severus fled once more to Egypt,¹⁶⁵ where he lived in various places in the desert, including Kellia, south of Alexandria,¹⁶⁶ until his death on 8 February 538.

¹⁶¹ Ps. Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 9.16; ed., trans. E.W. Brooks, *Historia ecclesiastica Zachariae rhetori vulgo adscripta*, CSCO 84, Scr. Syr. 39 (Louvain, 1921), pp. 123–131 (text); CSCO 88, Scr. Syr. 42 (Louvain, 1965), pp. 85–90 (trans.). See now the new English trans. with notes, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor: Church and War in Late Antiquity*, ed. G. Greatrex, trans. R.R. Phenix, C.B. Horn, with contributions by S.P. Brock, W. Witakowski, TTH 55 (Liverpool 2011), pp. 354–361.

¹⁶² Detailed records of these survive: see Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 232–240.

¹⁶³ On the date see Greatrex et al., *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah Rhetor*, p. 354 n. 224. The journey of Severus to Constantinople is related by Ps. Zachariah, *HE* 9.19; Brooks, CSCO 84, p. 135 (text); CSCO 88, p. 93 (trans.). Trans., notes in Greatrex et al., p. 367.

¹⁶⁴ See further Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, pp. 272–273.

¹⁶⁵ See the details of his departure given in his letter: Ps. Zachariah, *HE* 9.20; ed. Brooks, CSCO 84, pp. 138–140 (text); CSCO 88, pp. 95–96 (trans.). Trans. with notes in Greatrex et al., pp. 372–373.

¹⁶⁶ John of Beith Aphthonia, *Vie de Sévère*; ed., trans. M.-A. Kugener, PO 2/3 (Paris, 1907), pp. 300, 302.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATURAL DISASTERS

INTRODUCTION

Populations in both the East and West during the fifth and sixth centuries were visited by a series of natural disasters, including earthquakes, extreme heat and cold, famine, drought, fire, hail, pests, floods, a dust-veil event, tsunamis and plague. Many of these catastrophes were intertwined: for example, earthquakes and food-shortages were often followed by epidemics and drought/fire/floods by famine. Here we are not concerned with the historical geography of Late Antiquity *per se* but rather with the extent of episcopal responses to natural disasters as revealed in surviving letters.¹ Similarly our brief is not to investigate the scholarly consensus about characteristics or changes in the late-antique climate,² but to assess as far as the evidence allows the way in which bishops managed natural crises. As always we are at the mercy of our sources, for references to weather events derive mostly from histories, chronicles or hagiographical works, the historical records being to a considerable degree determined by their authors' interest in military operations, and the hagiographical by weather miracles, particularly rain and hail. It is also the case that most of the surviving evidence is local and sporadic, with the exception of the bubonic pandemic of the sixth century. We can note too that from the end of the fifth century onwards many natural phenomena were interpreted in an eschatological framework because Christians calculated that the period of 6000 years from the creation of the world to the advent of the anti-Christ came to an end in c. 500. Apocalyptic predictions in the Gospels of hunger, epidemics and war as presages of the end of time seemed to fit like a glove.³ This in turn

¹ The literature on the historical geography of the eastern empire is particularly extensive. See Telelis, "Weather and Climate", p. 432 n. 1.

² On which see Telelis, "Weather and Climate", p. 436 with n. 13. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, p. 166, remarks that it is generally accepted that a cold, humid climatic weather event hit Europe and the Mediterranean from c. 500, and lasted to between 850 and 1000.

³ See in particular P. Magdalino, "The History of the Future and its Uses: Prophecy, Policy and Propaganda", in eds. R. Beaton, C. Rouché, *The Making of Byzantine History. Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol*, Centre for Hellenic Studies, King's College London Publications

suggests that the eschatological interpretation of natural disasters and the management of such crises would *prima facie* have provided bishops with considerable challenges. In this chapter, as far as the surviving evidence allows, we shall see how they acquitted themselves.

For the period in which we are engaged in this volume we have recently been furnished with advanced scholarly tools that catalogue many natural disasters. For earthquakes we consult the work of E. Guidoboni and her collaborators,⁴ and for famine and plague, the survey of D. Stathakopoulos.⁵ M. Meier has provided a useful annotated bibliography of catastrophes in the East from 500 to 565,⁶ and I. Telelis has dealt at length with weather and climate change in Byzantium.⁷ Despite their usefulness, however, because of the diversity, bulk and complexity of the data and problems with dating, none of these reference works can be regarded as unfailingly accurate or complete. The dearth of evidence from episcopal correspondence for these otherwise amply documented natural disasters is also striking, and as far as possible we shall try to account for it. We also mention here the increasing attention paid by twentieth- and twenty-first century scholars to natural disasters and climate change in general, from, for example, archaeological, religious, historical, literary, sociological, psychological, scientific, medical and legal perspectives.⁸

EARTHQUAKES

As the catalogue of Guidoboni and associates demonstrates, earthquakes were frequent and severe particularly in the East during the fifth and sixth

1 (Aldershot, UK, Brookfield, VT, 1993), pp. 3–34; W. Brandes, “Anastasios *ho dikoros*: Endzeit-erwartung und Kaiserkritik in Byzanz um 500 n. Chr.,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 90 (1997), pp. 24–64; Av. Cameron, “Remaking the Past”, in eds. G. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar, *Late Antiquity. A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), pp. 1–20. Cf. H.-U. Wiemer, *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln in der römischen Kaiserzeit* (Berlin, New York, 2006), p. 261; Telelis, “Weather and Climate”, p. 442 with n. 29 (lit.).

⁴ See Guidoboni, *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes*.

⁵ *Famine and Pestilence*. Of approximately 125 entries for the fifth and sixth centuries in this survey, only nrs. 41, 52, 70, 71 and 77 pertain to episcopal letters.

⁶ *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians. Kontingenzerfahrung und Kontingenzbewältigung im 6. Jahrhundert n. Chr.*, *Hypomnemata* 147 (Göttingen, 2003).

⁷ Μετεωρολογικά φαινόμενα. See also his “Weather and Climate”. See too Koder, “Climate Change in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries?”, pp. 270–278.

⁸ Just as one example among many see the various contributions in eds. W. Kinzig, T. Rheindorf, *Katastrophen—und die Antworten der Religionen*, Studien des Bonner Zentrums für Religion und Gesellschaft 7 (Würzburg, 2011), esp. the editors’ introduction at pp. 7–17.

centuries, thanks to the normal activity of the tectonic plates located in the region. During this period, no fewer than sixty-seven occurrences are recorded in the sources, mostly in chronicles, histories and hagiography, among which are prominent the chronicles/chronographies of Marcellinus *comes*,⁹ Ps. Joshua the Stylite,¹⁰ and John Malalas;¹¹ the church histories of Zachariah Scholasticus¹² and Evagrius Scholasticus;¹³ the secular historians Procopius and Agathias;¹⁴ the biography of Simeon the Stylite the Younger;¹⁵ later writers of the Byzantine period like Theophanes, Cedrenus, Zonaras and Michael the Syrian, who often preserve excellent older sources that are otherwise lost; and occasional epigraphic evidence. There are only two pieces of evidence from what we might call an episcopal letter, namely those of Synesius of Cyrene and Severus of Antioch, which will be treated below. The evidence from sources for the western part of the empire is sparse in comparison, consisting mostly of the *Libri Pontificales* of Rome and Ravenna. What is also arresting is that the evidence provided for the occurrence of earthquakes owes very little to episcopal correspondence, which is limited, occasional, and sometimes defies interpretation.

We know from cumulative evidence from the (mostly historical) sources that Constantinople suffered severely from earthquakes in 402, 403, 412, 417, 423, 437, 442 (?), 447, 477/8, 525, 531/2, 533, 542, 546, 548, 554, 557 and 583.¹⁶

⁹ Ed. T. Mommsen, MGH AA 11 (Berlin, 1894); trans. B. Croke, *The Chronicle of Marcellinus. A Translation and Commentary*, Byzantina Australiensia 7 (Sydney, 1995).

¹⁰ *In incerti auctoris Chronicon pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, ed., trans. J.-B. Chabot, CSCO 91, Scr. Syr. 43 (text), 104, Scr. Syr. 53 (trans.) (Paris, Louvain, 1933); Eng. trans. with notes, introduction, F.R. Trombley, J.W. Watt, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite*, TTH 32 (Liverpool, 2000).

¹¹ Ed. L. Dindorf, *Malalas Chronographia* (Bonn, 1831); ed. J. Thurn, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 35 (Berlin, New York, 2000); trans. E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, R. Scott, *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, Byzantina Australiensia 4 (Melbourne, 1986).

¹² *HE*, ed., trans. E.W. Brooks; trans. Greatrex.

¹³ Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE*; eds. Bidez, Parmentier; trans. Whitby.

¹⁴ Procopius, *Bella*, ed. J. Hauriy, rev. G. Wirth, (Leipzig, 1963); ed., trans. H.B. Dewing, Loeb Classical Library (London, UK, Cambridge, MA, 1935). Agathias, *Historiarum libri quinque*; ed. R. Keydell, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 2 (Berlin, 1967); trans. J.D. Frendo, *Agathias, The Histories*, *Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae* 2A, Series Berolinensis (Berlin, New York, 1975).

¹⁵ Ed., trans. P. Van den Ven, *La vie ancienne de S. Syméon Stylite le Jeune (521–592)*, *Subsidia Hagiographica* 32 (Brussels, 1962–1970).

¹⁶ For the following dates see Guidoboni et al., *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes*, according to year. Cf. G. Downey, "Earthquakes at Constantinople and Vicinity, A.D. 324–1454", *Speculum* 30 (1955), pp. 596–600; W. Mayer, P. Allen, *The Churches of Syrian Antioch 300–638CE*, LAHR 5 (Leuven, 2012), pp. 262–277.

Syrian Antioch was destroyed by earthquake in 526, again in 528, and had to withstand at least another five seismic episodes during the rest of the sixth century (551, 557, 560/1, 577 [581?] and 588). Western cities were not exempt, Rome, for example, experiencing earthquakes in 408, 443, c. 484 (or 508), and Ravenna in 429, 443, 467 and possibly 501 and/or 502. The repeated loss of life and damage to buildings, churches, baths and city walls must have impacted greatly on the lives of citizens, and required, one would have thought, some serious explanation of theodicy from their bishops. With regard to the devastation of Antioch in 528, the church historian Evagrius writes:

[A] quaking and shaking struck the city and overturned and levelled almost all of it. Fire too followed these, as if apportioning the disaster with them. For what the former did not lay low the fire encompassed, burnt to ashes and incinerated ... And indeed Euphrasius [the patriarch] also was engulfed in the ruins and died, another disaster for the city, so that there was no one to take provision for its needs.¹⁷

After the disaster some people witnessed the appearance of a cross in the sky, and consequently part of the mountain above the city was renamed *Stavrin* ("cross").¹⁸ Thirty months later, after another destructive earthquake had undone the restoration work, the city was renamed *Theoupolis*, or "city of God". Although both these earthquakes are unequivocally and extensively attested in many ancient sources and feature in Guidoboni's catalogue,¹⁹ to our knowledge there is not a single episcopal letter that deals with either tragedy. This is perhaps all the more surprising since, as Sonnabend argues, even for such a seismically challenged city as Antioch, the events of 526 were horrendous.²⁰ It is surprising in another sense, for Ephrem of Amida, the man who was *comes Orientis* at the time of the first disaster and responsible for the reconstruction of the city, was elected patriarch by a grateful citizenry in 526/7 and remained in that office until his death in 544.²¹ During his

¹⁷ *HE* 4.5; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, pp. 155–156; trans. Whitby, pp. 203–204.

¹⁸ Malalas, *Chronographia*; ed. Dindorf, p. 466, 16–22.

¹⁹ *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes*, nrs. 203, 206.

²⁰ H. Sonnabend, *Naturkatastrophen in der Antike. Wahrnehmung–Deutung–Management* (Stuttgart, Weimar, 1999), p. 33. Guidoboni et al., *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes* (nr. 183), p. 299, calculates that a "destructive earthquake occurred roughly every fifty-seven to sixty years".

²¹ See the classic biography of Ephrem by J. Lebon, "Ephrem d'Amid, patriarche d'Antioche, 526–544", in *Mélanges d'histoire offerts à Charles Moeller à l'occasion de son jubilé de 50 années de professorat à l'Université de Louvain 1863–1913*, vol. 1, *Antiquité et Moyen Âge*, Université de Louvain recueil de travaux 40 (Louvain, Paris, 1914), pp. 197–214.

tenure he rebuilt the city a second time, fled before the Persian invasion in 540, perhaps negotiated with the invaders to save the Great Church, and with his people withstood the plague in 542. During all this time he was also heavily involved in christological debate.²² While in the ninth century Photius knew of fourteen of Ephrem's letters, none of them has survived,²³ but we may surmise that numerous other letters from such a high-profile and active imperial functionary, patriarch and theologian, some of them perhaps referring to natural disasters that he faced, have also unfortunately perished.

With regard to discerning the worth of what does survive of episcopal correspondence on the subject of earthquakes, let us first assess the case of Synesius, bishop of Cyrene from (probably) February 411 to his early death in 413, whom we shall also adduce when we deal with food-shortages and famine, below. We have three letters in Synesius' surviving corpus that deal ostensibly with earthquakes, namely, *Letters* 42, 61 and 66.²⁴ The first and third of these are concerned with the alleged outrages perpetrated by the governor of Pentapolis, Andronicus, a native of the region, whom Synesius portrays as violent, lawless and rapacious.²⁵ In *Letter* 42 Andronicus is denounced as the ultimate plague of Pentapolis, after the region had endured earthquake, a plague of locusts, food-shortage, fire and war. All these natural disasters are presented as having occurred within recent memory. However, as we shall also suggest under the topic of food-shortages where this same passage is adduced, it is probably rather the case that Andronicus is meant to be damned by association with these catastrophes of uncertain date. The evidence of earthquake in *Letter* 66 about the fortification of Hydrax in the Pentapolis having been ruined by earthquake is similarly of doubtful value, because Synesius is writing to Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, about the pressing woes of his diocese. It seems impossible to pinpoint the date of this earthquake, although scholars have tried to do so from historical and epigraphical perspectives.²⁶ *Letter* 61 recounts

²² See further T. Hainthaler in A. Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche* 2/3. *Die Kirchen von Jerusalem und Antiochien nach 451 bis 600*, ed. T. Hainthaler (Freiburg, 2002), pp. 357–373.

²³ See *CPG* 6908 for Photius' list.

²⁴ For Synesius' letters we have used Garzya, ed., Roques, trans., *Synésios de Cyrène; Ep.* 42 in vol. 2, pp. 54–57, *Ep.* 61 in vol. 2, pp. 76–78, *Ep.* 66 in vol. 3, pp. 173–186.

²⁵ For the conflict between Synesius and Andronicus, and its effects see P. Allen, "Brushes with the *Imperium*: Letters of Synesius of Cyrene and Augustine of Hippo on Crisis", in eds. Nathan, Garland, *Basileia: Essays*, pp. 45–53 with lit. review.

²⁶ D. Roques, *Synésios de Cyrène et la Cyrénaïque du Bas-Empire*, *Études d'antiquités*

the circumstances in which Synesius fled Constantinople during an earthquake, probably that of 402:

God shook the earth several times per day, and the people, most of them prostrate, addressed him with supplications because the ground was trembling. For my part, in this situation thinking that the sea was safer than land, I hurried down to the harbour ...²⁷

This earthquake and others about the same time are well attested in the sources, although the chronology is not firm.²⁸ In any case, Synesius' testimony dates from before his episcopal election and is therefore properly speaking not pertinent to our enquiry.

We turn now to an administrative letter written probably 519/20 by the exiled Severus of Antioch to his *locum tenentes*, John and John, both of whom are called presbyters and archimandrites, where we read the following passage:

Let your sanctities know that there was also an earthquake here on the fourteenth of October; a thing which in general rarely happens in the regions of Egypt; and no ordinary earthquake, but violent enough to shake buildings and cause them to tremble for a long space of time, passing over the small ones only, while everyone so to speak felt it. In certain cities of Egypt, especially in Anthrib, a pestilence and plague has also been reported to have occurred.²⁹

This throw-away comment is not unusual in seeming to connect earthquake with epidemic; however, despite its value as one of the very few references to earthquakes in episcopal letters, it has not been picked up either by Guidoboni et al. in their catalogue of earthquakes or by Stathakopoulos in his survey of epidemics. There is no other mention of earthquakes in Severus' surviving correspondence.

africaines (Paris, 1987), pp. 45–52 (followed by Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 315), dates the disaster to 365. A painted inscription in Greek published by D. Comparetti, "Iscrizione cristiana di Cirene", *Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene e delle Missioni in Oriente* 1 (1914), pp. 161–167 and dated by him to 394 is reproduced in Guidoboni et al. (nr. 162), who, however, are reluctant to link it with either date because of insufficient evidence.

²⁷ Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 77, 10–14. Our translation.

²⁸ See the discussion in Guidoboni et al., *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes*, nr. 163, pp. 282–283.

²⁹ *Select Letters* 5.12; ed., trans. Brooks, vol. 1, pp. 383–384, (text), vol. 2, p. 340 (trans.). Anthrib is the bishopric of Athrib(is) or Atrib, close to the Nile, north of Giza, since Severus was most likely in Lower Egypt at this stage. See R. Stewart, "Atrib", in ed. A.S. Atiya, *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1 (New York, 1991), p. 307. On Severus in exile see Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, pp. 25–30; see further bibliography pertaining to the exile in Youssef, "Severus of Antioch in Scetis", esp. pp. 158–163.

By way of contrast, in his hymns Severus is forthcoming about earthquakes and their liturgical commemoration.³⁰ In several of his hymns this same letter-writer deals with recent crises caused by natural disasters.³¹ As we have said, Antioch was particularly acquainted with the phenomenon of earthquakes. *Hymn* 256–I–II,³² which was composed while the city of Antioch was still in the grip of the earthquake of 7 September 513, opens with a citation of Psalm 60:4: “*You have shaken the earth and opened it*”, and proceeds with a plea that God not condemn the Antiochenes to death by earthquake as a punishment for their sins. This earthquake is not attested in any other surviving source.³³ *Hymn* 257–II–VI³⁴ deals similarly with the ongoing crisis of an earthquake, attributed to divine chastisement, which crisis may well be identical with that described in the previous hymn. *Hymn* 258–III–V,³⁵ on the other hand, refers to a past crisis when a merciful God delivered the people from an earthquake. The next hymn in the collection, *Hymn* 259–IV–III,³⁶ refers to both deliverance from dire troubles and impending divine wrath, perhaps indicating an intermediate state between two crises, while the following piece, *Hymn* 260–V–VIII,³⁷ described in the manuscripts as “Another in commemoration of the same terrors”, commemorates an earthquake that occurred on the Feast of the Holy Cross, 14 September,

³⁰ On what follows see P. Allen, “Stage-Managing Crisis: Bishops’ Liturgical Responses to Crisis (4th–6th Centuries)”, in eds. Sim, Allen, *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts*, pp. 159–172 at pp. 167–168.

³¹ On Severus and his hymns see John of Beith Aphthonia, *Vita Severi*; ed., trans. M.-A. Kugener, *Vie de Sévère*, PO 2/3 (Paris, 1907), pp. 244–255. Severus of Antioch, *Hymns* (CPG 7072); ed., trans. E.W. Brooks, *The Hymns of Severus and Others in the Syriac Version of Paul of Edessa as Revised by James of Edessa*, PO 6/1 (Paris, 1909), pp. 1–179, and 7/5, 2nd ed. (Turnhout, 1981), pp. 593–802. See further Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, pp. 54–55; Alpi, *La route royale*, pp. 160–161. The composition of the collection in which Severus’ hymns survive is problematical. See further C. Burris, L. Van Rompay, “Some Further Notes on Thecla in Syriac Christianity”, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 6/2 (2003), pp. 337–342, online at: <http://www.bethmardutho.org/index.php/hugoye/volume-index/155.html> (accessed 30 June, 2012). On the genre of the hymn see M. Lattke, *Hymnus. Materialien zu einer Geschichte der antiken Hymnologie*, *Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus* 19 (Freiburg, Göttingen, 1991), pp. 358–359 on Severus. For liturgical commemoration of earlier earthquakes in Constantinople see B. Croke, “Two Early Byzantine Earthquakes and Their Liturgical Commemoration”, *Byzantion* 51 (1981), pp. 122–147.

³² PO 7/5, p. 705.

³³ See the silence in Guidoboni et al., *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes*, ad loc.

³⁴ PO 7/5, pp. 706–707.

³⁵ PO 7/5, p. 707.

³⁶ PO 7/5, p. 708.

³⁷ PO 7/5, pp. 708–709.

and alludes to after-shocks which are apparently ongoing (“remember thy clemency and thy mercy, Lord; and remove from us the threat of wrath and anger that is threatening and hanging over us”). If we link this *Hymn* with Severus’ *Homily* 31, delivered on 14 September 513, where the patriarch refers to an earthquake that old people in the congregation can remember,³⁸ then it is clear that the homilist is referring to the particularly severe seismic crisis that occurred in Antioch in the night from 13–14 September 458 and is well attested in the sources.³⁹ Thus Severus’ *Hymn* 260–V–VIII, while harking back to a much more critical earthquake in Antioch’s history, has an apotropaic function with regard to the current after-shocks of the earthquake of 513. According to its title in the manuscripts, *Hymn* 261–VI–III, the next piece in the collection,⁴⁰ commemorates ‘the same ancient earthquakes’. The congregation sings: “We keep the commemoration of the ancient chastisement of the earthquake, in order that we may not by forgetting God fall into a depth of evil deeds”. This hymn, we may assume, is a liturgical enshrinement of the seismic crisis some sixty years earlier. Severus’ hymns are valuable examples of the liturgical processing of the earthquake of 513 and its after-shocks, although this calamity was apparently not as devastating as the earthquake of 458 or those of 526 and 528; while these are well attested in the sources, no liturgical commemoration of these crises survives.⁴¹

We have devoted some space here to Severus’ hymns in order to suggest that in the dichotomy between the information conveyed in episcopal letters and that transmitted in, for example, hymns, literary genres may have played a role in the amount of information that has come down to us about earthquakes and other natural disasters in Christian antiquity. In liturgical texts such as the hymns of Severus the sin-and-punishment syndrome is both brought to the fore and mitigated, which capacity probably does not pertain to the letter-writing genre *per se*. We see the same trend in Romanos Melodos’ commemorations of the earthquakes and fires in the early part of Justinian’s reign, with Romanos framing these as an instance when wise intervention from the good emperor who had saved his people, and twenty years later as evidence for the last days of the Apocalypse being at hand, with

³⁸ PO 36/4, pp. 640–641.

³⁹ See Guidoboni et al., *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes* (nr. 183), pp. 296–300; Alpi, *La route royale*, vol. 1, p. 160.

⁴⁰ PO 7/5, pp. 709–710.

⁴¹ Guidoboni et al., *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes*, pp. 314–321 and pp. 323–325, respectively.

the anti-Christ represented as an emperor, perhaps Justinian.⁴² Once again, however, we may be at the mercy of our sources in that such a small proportion of episcopal letters from this period survives, as the case of Ephrem of Amida illustrates graphically. We shall return to this problematic in the conclusion to the present chapter.

FOOD-SHORTAGES AND FAMINE⁴³

The occurrences of famine as natural disasters are more difficult to gauge because many food-shortages were caused by human agency. As an example we can cite the famine that is reported by Zosimus and two church historians as occurring in Rome between the end of 409 and spring of the following year, caused by Heraclianus, the *comes Africae*, who prevented provisions of oil and grain from leaving African ports for Rome.⁴⁴ As prefect of the city of Rome in 468 before his election to the episcopate of Clermont-Ferrand, Sidonius Apollinaris took pre-emptive action against a starving crowd by commandeering the supplies of five ships at Ostia. The shortage was probably caused by the Vandal war in Africa.⁴⁵ Likewise the fire and resultant famine mentioned in one of the later letters of Sidonius, where as bishop of Clermont-Ferrand he refers to starvation caused by the destruction of crops by fire—a situation alleviated at the private expense of his addressee, Bishop Patiens of Lyon—could be a natural disaster, but equally a consequence of the frequent Gothic incursions around Clermont-Ferrand in the 470s.⁴⁶ Similarly, the famine, followed by epidemic (possibly, as often, a consequence of eating bad food), that occurred in Rome in the summer of 537 was the result of the siege of the city by the Goths, like the famine and

⁴² R. Scott, "Justinian's New Age and the Second Coming", in R. Scott, *Byzantine Chronicles and the Sixth Century*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Farnham, 2012), XIX, pp. 1–22, at pp. 13–19.

⁴³ For the primary sources see under Chapter 4, Earthquakes, above.

⁴⁴ Zosimus, *Hist. nov.* 6.11; Philostorgius, *HE* 12.3; Sozomen, *HE* 9.8.7–8. See Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, pp. 224–225 (nr. 44). In addition to Stathakopoulos' work on this topic see P. Garnsey, *Famine and Food in the Graeco-Roman World. Responses to Risk and Crisis* (Cambridge, 1988); J. Durliat, *De la ville antique à la ville byzantine. Le problème des subsistances*, Collection de l'École française de Rome 136 (Rome, 1990); Holman, *The Hungry are Dying*.

⁴⁵ *Ep.* 1.10; ed., trans. Anderson vol. 1, pp. 392–393. Cf. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, pp. 243–244 (nr. 71).

⁴⁶ *Ep.* 6.12; ed., trans. Anderson, vol. 2, p. 281. Not mentioned in Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*.

epidemics in Emilia Romagna, the Marche and Tuscany (spring-summer 539), which were caused by the fact that agriculture had been abandoned because of warfare with the Goths.⁴⁷ Instances of food-shortages caused by human agency could be multiplied *ad libitum* in situations of siege.⁴⁸

Other scenarios present themselves for interpretation. In July or August 411 the *curialis* Synesius, bishop of Cyrene in Pentapolis, wrote to the sophist, philosopher, high official and *savant* Troilus a letter in which he asked the highest authorities to safeguard the law in his jurisdiction. The bishop dwells on the pitiable situation of Pentapolis, where famine, barbarian incursions, and the corruption of local officials are in evidence.⁴⁹ A close look at Synesius and his circumstances, however, reveals that in this year he was involved in a bitter conflict with the local governor Andronicus; we may suspect, then, that all the other miseries that he lays before Troilus in this letter are meant to bolster his case against Andronicus. Thus the famine, while real, may have been caused by the incursions of the local tribes, about which Synesius complains several times in his correspondence, or else it is adduced simply as another avenue of attack against Andronicus,⁵⁰ in which the sin-and-punishment syndrome is adduced or hinted at.⁵¹ As in other examples of the polemical use of natural disasters, this avenue of attack has, of course, eschatological implications.

Yet other cases demanding interpretation are the letters of Bishops John of Antioch and Firmus of Caesarea (Cappadocia). The communication from John and his synod, dating from 431 and addressed to the emperors Theodosius and Valentinian, gives his reasons for arriving late at the Council of Ephesus: he was forced to travel by land, there was a food-shortage in Antioch and he stayed on to prevent the populace from rioting, and there were serious unseasonable storms.⁵² Since the entire tone of the letter is apologetic and it is not said whether the famine is the result of a natural disaster, it is difficult to know what to make of the accumulation of excuses, unless perhaps the torrential rains caused the food-shortage in the first

⁴⁷ See Sathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, p. 270 (nr. 94), pp. 272–274 (nr. 98).

⁴⁸ See further A.D. Lee, *War in Late Antiquity. A Social History* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 123–146, on the social impact of warfare.

⁴⁹ *Ep.* 73; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, pp. 194–197, with notes at pp. 326–328.

⁵⁰ In any case, there is no mention of this famine in Sathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*.

⁵¹ On this syndrome see E. Watts, "Interpreting Catastrophe: Disasters in the Works of Pseudo-Joshua the Stylite, Socrates Scholasticus, Philostorgius, and Timothy Aelurus", *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2/1 (2009), pp. 79–98, *passim*.

⁵² *Ep. synodi Orientalium ad Theodosium et Valentinianum imp. aug.* (CPG 6323); ACO 1/1.5, pp. 124–125. This famine is nr. 52 in Sathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, p. 230.

place.⁵³ Firmus' letter dates probably from the following year (432). He entreats a high-placed official, the *megaloprepestatos* or *magnificentissimus* Helladius, not to send troops through Cappadocia, where because of famine the populace are unable to fulfil the usual onerous obligations of the citizenry to feed them.⁵⁴ In this case it could be argued that, if the famine did not come about from a natural disaster, it could have occurred because the agricultural and other supplies of the region were exhausted after winter and new crops were late to appear.⁵⁵

Clearer are the following cases. In two of his *Festal Letters* Cyril of Alexandria refers to crop failures as the result of natural disasters; likewise, Theodoret of Cyrrhus mentions outright crop failure in two letters. These four letters will be discussed in detail in the case-studies below. There is evidence of food-shortages in Rome both before and during the pontificate of Bishop Gelasius (492–496), one of which is said to be the result of drought in Africa and Gaul, and a visitation of the plague both in the city and country.⁵⁶ In a polemical work written in letter-form against the senator Andromachus and other notable Romans,⁵⁷ the bishop is less concerned with the pastoral ramifications of these events than to defend himself against the charge made by some at Rome that such disasters were in fact retribution for Gelasius' abolition of the pagan feast of the Lupercalia.⁵⁸ The *Liber Pontificalis* relates that Gelasius was responsible for saving his city from the threat of famine,

⁵³ This is the charitable suggestion of Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, p. 230.

⁵⁴ This is taken by Wiemer, *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln*, p. 273, as an indication that the bishop did not see it as his duty to assume administrative responsibility for a food crisis, although he argues on the basis of the letter of John of Antioch, discussed above, that a bishop was expected to remain in his city during such crises ("Präsenzpflicht"). On the strain imposed on particular cities or regions by the presence of the military see Garnsey, *Famine*, p. 253.

⁵⁵ *Ep.* 12; eds., trans. Calvet-Sebasti, Gatier, SC 350, pp. 96–99, with n. 4 (end) on their suggestion about the circumstances possibly underlying the shortage. This food-shortage in Cappadocia is not catalogued by Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, but may be a follow-on from his nr. 52, which pertains to a shortage in the region of Antioch in May–June 431, given that the dating of Firmus' letter is probable, not certain.

⁵⁶ Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nr. 77, p. 248. Cf. also nr. 76.

⁵⁷ On the form of the letter see N. McLynn, "Crying Wolf: The Pope and the Lupercalia", *Journal of Roman Studies* 98 (2008), pp. 161–175 at p. 163; *ibid.*, p. 162, on the fact that the attribution of the letter to Gelasius has been questioned. For Andromachus see *PLRE* 2, p. 89, s.v. Andromachus 3.

⁵⁸ *Adversus Andromachum*; ed. G. Pomarès, *Lettre contre les Lupercales et dix-huit messes du Sacramentaire Léonien*, SC 65 (Paris, 1959), par. 14, 18, 23. pp. 172–175, 176–177, 180–181. Cf. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, p. 76. On Gelasius' arguments for the abolition of the Lupercalia see McLynn, "Crying Wolf", pp. 161–175.

perhaps the same natural disaster as the pope discusses in one of his letters.⁵⁹ It may be even that this energetic bishop took on the administration of the *annona* in the city of Rome during his short episcopate.⁶⁰

From Ps. Joshua the Stylite, writing from the city of Edessa between 494 and 506, we have the most comprehensive and graphic description of famine from antiquity.⁶¹ The shortage appears to have been caused by a series of natural disasters: an infestation of locusts, a lack of grain and other foodstuffs, and was itself followed by an epidemic. The influx of people from the surrounding countryside, who heard that the Edessenes took good care of the needy, exacerbated the famine, and representations were made to the emperor by both the bishop and secular officials. The governor Demosthenes came back from Constantinople with a considerable amount of money for famine relief of the poor:

[H]e marked many of them on their necks with lead seals and gave each of them a pound of bread per day. However, they could not live (on this), for they had been debilitated by the distress of hunger which consumed them. Mortality increased in November, and again in December [500/1CE] when the frost and ice appeared. Since they spent the night in the colonnades and streets, the sleep of death took hold of them in their sleep.⁶²

As in John of Ephesus' account of the plague (see below), one of the greatest problems in Edessa was the disposal of corpses, to the point that pre-Christian graves had to be used. Ps. Joshua is full of praise for the city's bishop, Peter,⁶³ and for various other clerics who assumed a leadership role in tending the sick and starving, but once again we have no episcopal letter to inform us about the catastrophe.

For all that, food-shortages following crop-failures were common everywhere in the Mediterranean in this period. The great famine throughout Italy at the end of 450 is but one of many examples. It was a wide-spread shortage which supposedly caused people to sell children and kinsfolk, a

⁵⁹ *LP* 1, p. 255; trans. R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis)*, TTH 6, 2nd ed. (Liverpool, 2000), p. 44.

⁶⁰ Suggested by Durlat, *De la ville antique*, pp. 134–137. On the pontificate of Gelasius see J. Taylor, "The Early Papacy at Work: Gelasius I (492–6)", *Journal of Religious History* 8 (1975), pp. 317–352; B. Neil, P. Allen, *Letters of Gelasius I (492–496): Pastor and Micro-Manager of Rome* (forthcoming), with previous bibliography.

⁶¹ *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln*, p. 259. Ps. Joshua's description (*Chron.* 38–43; ed. Chabot, CSCO 91, pp. 263–270; trans. Trombley, Watt, pp. 37–46) is discussed by Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, pp. 250–255, nr. 80, and by Watts, "Interpreting Catastrophe", pp. 1–2.

⁶² *Chron.* 42; ed. Chabot, CSCO 91, p. 268; trans. Trombley, Watt, p. 43.

⁶³ See further Wiemer, *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln*, pp. 271–272.

crisis so serious that the management of its aftermath was legislated for by the emperor Valentinian.⁶⁴ Given that there was no warfare on a large scale at that time, this famine appears indeed to have resulted from a natural disaster.⁶⁵ So too do the severe famine in North Africa in 484, related by Bishop Victor of Vita in his *History*, a disaster caused by extreme drought and the famine and locust plague in Palestine in 517–518 that were caused by a five-year drought.⁶⁶ While there is some limited evidence of episcopal intervention to solve food-shortages in the fifth and sixth centuries, we cannot agree with Wiemer's view that town councils from the fifth century onwards played an insignificant role in dealing with food-shortages, leaving the bishop to gain in profile as a spiritual leader and advocate for the poor.⁶⁷ While this sounds much like sentiments in Brown's work,⁶⁸ Brown is not cited by Wiemer, and it is a theory that in any case is not supported by the evidence in bishops' letters, with which we are concerned here.

EPIDEMIC DISEASES

Epidemics and pestilence are well attested in fifth- and sixth-century sources, epidemics being often associated with the consumption of bad food during shortages, as said above.⁶⁹ A concomitant reduction in the labour force after epidemics could also cause food-shortages. In a letter of Gelasius I we have an episcopal letter documenting a severe epidemic in Rome in 467 (before his pontificate), perhaps followed by a food-shortage.⁷⁰ The letter written from exile by Severus of Antioch, adduced above in the discussion on earthquakes, mentions in passing an epidemic in Egypt that followed serious tremors.⁷¹ This letter probably dates from 519/20.

⁶⁴ *Nov. Val.* 33; *CTh* 5.8–10, pp. 138–140; trans. Pharr, p. 544.

⁶⁵ See Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nr. 63, pp. 237–238.

⁶⁶ See Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nrs. 74 and 85, at p. 245 and pp. 259–261, respectively.

⁶⁷ *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln*, p. 281.

⁶⁸ Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*.

⁶⁹ In addition to the primary sources listed under the section on earthquakes above, see John of Ephesus, *HE*, as preserved in the *Chronicon* of Ps. Dionysius of Tel-Mahre; ed., trans. J.-B. Chabot, *Incerti auctoris Chronicon Pseudo-Dionysianum vulgo dictum*, 1–2, CSCO 91, Scr. Syr. 3/1 (text), 104, Scr. Syr. 3/2 (trans.) (Louvain, 1927, 1933); trans. W. Witakowski, *Pseudo-Dionysius of Tel-Mahre. Chronicle (known also as the Chronicle of Zuqnin) Part III*, TTH 22 (Liverpool, 1996).

⁷⁰ *Adversus Andromachum* 13; ed. Pomarès, p. 173. See Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nr. 70, p. 243.

⁷¹ *Select Letters* 5.12; ed., trans. Brooks, vol. 1, pp. 383–384 (text), vol. 2, p. 340 (trans.).

However, it is the so-called Justinianic pandemic that raged around the Mediterranean from 541/2 and did not abate until the eighth century that is predominant in the fifth- and sixth-century source material.⁷² This was a demographical crisis of huge proportions which not only reduced the population significantly but also contributed to a redistribution of land as fertile estates were left deserted and survivors moved in; the sources inform us that no place—particularly not a densely-populated city—was immune from its random but vicious progress. This pandemic also had a significant impact on the contemporary reputation and *Nachleben* of Emperor Justinian, putting him in a triumvirate with Xerxes and Nero in terms of negative *Kaiserkritik*.⁷³ All in all, it would have been impossible for contemporary bishops in the empire, both East and West, to avoid dealing with the physical, psychological and social implications of such a long-running disaster and, in the case of earthquakes too, attempting some theodicy with the Christians entrusted to their pastoral care.

Several graphic and sustained descriptions exist of the pandemic in the sixth century, deriving exclusively from the eastern empire, the most important being those of Ps. Joshua the Stylite, Procopius, John of Ephesus (whose *HE* is partly contained in Ps. Dionysius' *Chronicle*) and Evagrius Scholasticus. We begin with Ps. Joshua, whose exact identity is unknown but who certainly was an eyewitness of catastrophic events in Edessa in Syria between the years 494–506 CE. During this time Edessa witnessed not only the plague but also earthquakes, infestations of locusts, unusual solar phenomena and famine. While as we saw above, Wiemer brands Ps. Joshua's account of the Edessan famine as the most extensive and exact description that has come down to us from antiquity,⁷⁴ the Stylite's detailed description of the plague that hit his city is equally comprehensive.

As all the people had sinned, they all fell victim to this disease. Swellings and tumours appeared on all our citizens, and the faces of many became puffed up and filled with pus, making it a fearful sight. Some had sores or pustules over their whole body, even to the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet, while others had great fissures on every single limb.⁷⁵

⁷² Over and above Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nrs. 41, 52, 70, 71 and 77, pp. 110–154, nrs. 102–112, pp. 277–289, and nrs. 114–118, pp. 290–294, for lit. on the sixth-century plague see Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, pp. 321–341, pp. 373–387, and the essays in ed. L. Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity. The Pandemic of 541–750* (New York, 2007).

⁷³ See Sonnabend, *Naturkatastrophen*, pp. 148–153.

⁷⁴ *Staatlichkeit und politisches Handeln*, p. 259.

⁷⁵ *Chron.* 26; ed. Chabot, CSCO 91, p. 253; trans. Trombley, Watt, p. 23.

In the ensuing mayhem of a quadruple affliction, the citizens took to violence and the bishop of the city, Cyrus, urged them to make donations towards eucharistic vessels.⁷⁶ Cyrus and his successor, Peter, who replaced him in 498 (d. 510), play a prominent role in Ps. Joshua's narrative. In the wake of the solar phenomena, for example, Bishop Peter is said to have organised processions and public prayers and hymn-singing,⁷⁷ and to have petitioned the emperor to waive taxes.⁷⁸

John of Ephesus, himself a bishop, wrote an account of the plague in his *Church History*, which is preserved in the *Chronicle* of Ps. Dionysius of Tel-Mahre. This is the most graphic representation of the pestilential drama confronting Justinian's empire, with depictions of rotting corpses on the streets, houses like tombs, ships stranded in harbours for lack of personnel, empty palaces, deserted highways and abandoned villages. John quotes from the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Joel to impress upon his readers that this natural disaster is a punishment for sin. He describes how the plague fixed first on the poor when it arrived in Constantinople, claiming that sometimes 16,000 corpses lay in the streets in a single day and that over 300,000 were taken off the streets. "The entire city then came to a standstill as if it had perished, so that its food supply stopped."⁷⁹ Much of John's narrative is preoccupied with the difficulty of disposing of bodies, and although at one point he describes Justinian's interventions to assist with this problem, there is no mention in his entire account of any role played by a bishop in the disasters that had befallen the capital of the eastern empire, or any other region for that matter.⁸⁰

In Evagrius' account of the plague there are also personal details, given that he suffered buboes while a child and lost several family members to the pestilence in its various occurrences, but there is no mention of episcopal leadership in these crises, although the church historian himself was in the employ of Patriarch Gregory of Antioch (570–593) and well acquainted with his predecessors.⁸¹

While the literary evidence for the "Justinianic" pandemic is overwhelmingly eastern (Greek and Syriac) and derives from historical and hagiographical sources, there are also some inscriptions, particularly from Palestine and

⁷⁶ *Chron.* 28; ed. Chabot, CSCO 91, p. 255; trans. Trombley, Watt, p. 26.

⁷⁷ *Chron.* 36; ed. Chabot, CSCO 91, p. 263; trans. Trombley, Watt, pp. 35–36.

⁷⁸ *Chron.* 39; ed. Chabot, CSCO 91, p. 266; trans. Trombley, Watt, pp. 40–41.

⁷⁹ Ps. Dionysius, *Chron.* a. 855, ch. 4; ed. Chabot, p. 97; trans. Witakowski, p. 88.

⁸⁰ For the entire episode see Chabot, ed., pp. 80–101; trans. Witakowski, pp. 74–93.

⁸¹ *HE* 4.29; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, pp. 177–179; trans. Whitby, pp. 229–232.

Arabia, which may corroborate the progress of the plague,⁸² although only one of them mentions the disaster specifically. This is the inscription put up by the elders of the Arabian city of Zora in 542/3 on which it is stated that their bishop, Varos, died of buboes.⁸³ In the West the epigraphical evidence is also sparse. Kulikowski remarks that in Spain only “a single epitaph from the period attests to death from plague”.⁸⁴ It is noteworthy that not a single episcopal letter from either East or West, with the exception of Gelasius’ tract *Adversus Andromachum*, attests to this devastating and recurring natural disaster.

SILENCE OF THE SOURCES

In this chapter we have established that there are very few episcopal letters from the fifth and sixth centuries dealing with natural disasters, although, as we remarked at the beginning, other evidence for the whole gamut of natural disasters during this period is irrefutable. Letters of Synesius of Cyrene, John of Antioch, Cyril of Alexandria, Firmus of Caesarea, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Gelasius of Rome and Severus of Antioch give sparse evidence of various disasters, some of which may be natural rather than caused by human agency, though it may be doubted whether some contemporaries bothered to differentiate between the two kinds. Again, the rhetoric employed by some bishops in their treatment of natural disasters, for example, Synesius and perhaps John of Antioch, makes it difficult to assess how seriously we are to take reports of catastrophes: catalogues of woes including natural disasters do not necessarily prove historical events. Some of the few surviving episcopal letters we do have are not recorded in the reference works: these are two *Festal Letters* of Cyril of Alexandria on crop failure as a result of natural disaster, two letters of Theodoret dealing with repeated

⁸² Adduced by J. Durlat, “La peste du VI^e siècle. Pour un nouvel examen des sources byzantines”, in ed. C. Abadie-Reynal, *Hommes et richesses dans l’empire Byzantin I (IV^e–VII^e siècles)*, Réalités byzantines (Paris, 1989), pp. 107–119, esp. p. 108. See further Trombley, Watt, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Joshua*, p. 46 n. 221; for the reconstruction of the beginnings of the pandemic see Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, pp. 279–280; and cf. Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, p. 326 n. 112, on epigraphical evidence.

⁸³ Ed. J. Koder, “Ein einschriftlicher Beleg zur justinianischen Pest in Zora (Azra’a)”, *Byzantinoslavica* 56 (1995), pp. 13–18. Cf. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, pp. 281–282, nr. 106.

⁸⁴ M. Kulikowski, “Spanish Plague in Late Antiquity”, pp. 150–170, in ed. Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, at p. 156.

food-shortages, and a letter from exile of Severus of Antioch in which he mentions earthquake and epidemic in Egypt, but not in a pastoral or managerial manner. Were very few letters composed by bishops on the topic of natural disasters, or have practically all of them perished?

In dealing with the paucity of epistolographical evidence for crisis in the fifth and sixth centuries, particularly in this chapter for natural disasters, we have taken cognisance of the remarks of Alföldy, who pointed out that the crisis in the third century (which we know was in some ways similar to that of the fifth and sixth centuries) is found reported in works of history, rhetoric, apologetics and philosophy (but not letters; our addendum).⁸⁵ This observation, together with the dearth of episcopal letters related to natural disasters during the timeframe of our research, has led us to look further afield in order to ascertain whether the manifest lack of evidence in letters is perhaps endemic to the epistolary genre. In so doing, and relying on Guidoboni, Stathakopoulos and Telelis, although as we indicated at the outset these works are not absolutely comprehensive, we found that for the fourth century there are only eight letters pertaining to these natural phenomena, three written by bishops (Basil of Caesarea and Ambrose of Milan) and five by pagans (Libanius and Symmachus).⁸⁶

John Chrysostom, whom we have deliberately not treated extensively in this volume, wrote from his exile a letter to Bishop Innocent of Rome between 405 and 407, detailing the hardships he had to put up with: “famine, pestilence, wars, continual sieges, indescribable solitude, daily deaths, and Isaurian swords”.⁸⁷ Although it seems that there was indeed a serious famine in the regions of John’s exile in 405, it is difficult to lend complete credence to this litany of woes, especially given that they are written by an increasingly disaffected exile.⁸⁸ While the *Registrum epistularum* of Gregory I of Rome, which compared with the letters we have been studying in this chapter is a huge collection from a single individual, also lies outside our chronological remit, it is pertinent to note that there too, little can be found on natural

⁸⁵ G. Alföldy, “Historisches Bewußtsein während der Krise des 3. Jahrhunderts”, in *Krisen in der Antike. Bewußtsein und Bewältigung*, Bochumer Historische Studien 13 (Düsseldorf, 1975), pp. 112–132 at p. 113.

⁸⁶ See Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nrs. 16 (Libanius); 21 (Basil); 24, 31, 33, 37 (Symmachus); 28, 29 (Ambrose).

⁸⁷ John Chry., *Ep. 2 ad Innocentium*; PG 52, 535–536. Trans. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, p. 221, nr. 41.

⁸⁸ On John’s progressively worsening psychological state see Delmaire, “Les lettres de Jean Chrysostome”, pp. 283–291.

disasters: two letters attest to food-shortages in 591 and 595,⁸⁹ and three to visitations of the plague.⁹⁰

If we then consider the evidence after the year 600 CE down to the tenth century, the same pattern emerges, but in an even more pronounced form. Every mention of a natural disaster derives from chronicles, histories, or hagiographical works. Still more pointedly we note that in Telelis' inventory from the fourth to the tenth centuries not a single letter of any kind is registered as evidence of climate events. What is also striking is the disparity between the numbers of reports of natural disasters between East and West, the eastern empire providing significantly more, but still limited, material, while the evidence from both parts of the empire tends to be region-specific.

Here is the place to offer further comments on episcopal epistolary reactions, or lack of them, to climate change in Late Antiquity. In his catalogue of climate and weather events in the fifth and sixth centuries, Telelis lists no fewer than 138 climatic events (not all of them natural disasters), attested in three types of sources: chronicles, histories and hagiographical accounts;⁹¹ but, as we have already said, there is no evidence from episcopal or other letters concerning these phenomena. There is a scholarly consensus that after about 500 there were climate-change events, although the extent is disputed and some phenomena were no doubt viewed through an eschatological lens; but if bishops were not interested anyway in recording in their letters natural events and their impact, we could not expect them to write about such changes, even if they realized what was happening. Even such general and devastating events as the regression of cultivated land and widespread demographic decline caused by the plague, although it was probably short-term, do not rate a mention in episcopal correspondence;⁹² nor does a widely documented dust-veil event, an uncommon phenomenon, which occurred throughout the empire over about an eighteen-month period in 536–537 and caused crops not to ripen properly.⁹³ When phenomena of such magnitude that affected the whole empire are not reported, it is then not sur-

⁸⁹ *Reg.* 1.70, 5.36; ed. Norberg, vol. 1, pp. 78–79, pp. 304–307; trans. Martyn, vol. 1, p. 194, and vol. 2, p. 350, respectively. Cf. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nr. 153, pp. 322–323.

⁹⁰ *Reg.* 2.2, 9.232, 10.20; ed. Norberg, vol. 1, pp. 90–91; vol. 2, pp. 814–815, pp. 850–851; trans. Martyn, vol. 1, pp. 184–185, vol. 2, pp. 705–706, and vol. 3, pp. 729–730, respectively. Cf. Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, n. 154, p. 323; nr. 162, pp. 332–333.

⁹¹ Telelis, *Μετεωρολογικά φαινόμενα*, vol. 1, pp. 141–277.

⁹² On these results of natural disasters and climate change see Koder, “Climatic Change in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries?”; Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, pp. 166–168.

⁹³ Registered in Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, nr. 92, pp. 265–268.

prising that other, more local, straws in the wind regarding climate change are ignored too. Just two examples will suffice here: firstly, the serious inundations that occurred in Rome in 411, 555, 579 and 589, which are attested mostly in chronicles,⁹⁴ and secondly the tsunami on the coast of the Levant on 9 July 551.⁹⁵

When we consider a non-epistolographical literary genre, namely the *Liber Pontificalis*, we find different approaches to natural disasters within the one genre. In the Roman *Liber*, for example, such disasters mostly rate a mention only insofar as they witness to the concomitant generosity of the bishop of Rome to his city, whereas Bishop Agnellus, the ninth-century author of the *Liber* of Ravenna, is happy to include disasters of many kinds, not only the catastrophic but also the merely shocking.⁹⁶

Sonnabend suggests that after catastrophes people want something graphic on durable material such as stone or bronze to help with meaning-making, particularly in cemeteries.⁹⁷ While this is at first blush plausible, there is still very little clear epigraphical evidence of this preference in our period, particularly on the part of bishops, and even the episcopal liturgical commemoration of natural disasters, as we have seen, is pretty much limited to the hymns of Severus of Antioch. In addition, as we have already suggested, convincing meaning-making is difficult within the limited compass of a letter or even a homily, as opposed to a chronicle or history. We have discussed the sparse epigraphical records of the plague from Arabia to Spain, and Durliat has drawn attention to the scant references to the sixth-century plague in non-historical sources: epigraphy, papyrological documents, numismatics, architecture and archaeology, but he also notes that even administrative correspondence is strangely silent about this natural disaster.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ See Sonnabend, *Naturkatastrophen*, pp. 60–63, on the Classical period; G.S. Aldrete, *Floods of the Tiber in Ancient Rome* (Baltimore, 2007), p. 243.

⁹⁵ Not catalogued by Stathakopoulos; on the tsunami phenomena see H. Dey, B. Goodman-Tchernov, "Tsunamis and the Port of Caesarea Maritima over the *Longue Durée*: A Geoarchaeological Perspective", *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 23 (2010), pp. 265–284.

⁹⁶ See in more detail B. Neil, "Crisis and Wealth in Byzantine Italy: The *Libri Pontificales* of Rome, Ravenna", *Byzantion* 82 (2012), pp. 279–303. Cf. Durliat, "La peste", p. 113, who notes that both *Libri* are not informative in their information about the plague.

⁹⁷ *Naturkatastrophen*, p. 153–154.

⁹⁸ Durliat, "La peste". See too Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, p. 324, n. 104. Cf. W. Brandes, "Byzantine Cities in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries—Different Sources, Different Histories?", in eds. G.P. Brogiolo, B. Ward-Perkins, *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, The Transformation of the Roman World 4 (Leiden, 1999), pp. 25–57 at pp. 33–34.

All these findings so far point to the possibility that we are not reckoning with a huge corpus of lost letters on the subject of natural disasters, but that rather, as a general rule, the epistolographical genre did not lend itself to recording such events. We adduced the case of the single letter of Severus of Antioch which reports earthquake and epidemic in a detached, “news-reporting” and non-pastoral manner, and juxtaposed this with his quite expansive hymnological treatment of earthquakes, where he plays on the fear and guilt of his singing congregations in either very recent catastrophes or disasters within living memory. It is also the case that within the limited compass of a letter, a homily, or even a hymn, the bishop did not have enough elbow-room to develop a programmatic treatment or theodicy of any natural disaster of recent occurrence or within living memory, as opposed, for example, to the historians of church and state who were at liberty to expatiate on such phenomena to the extent that they fitted their historiographical agenda. Thus Watts’ observations on the political events of 410 which led the church historian Philostorgius to “integrate the sack of Rome ... into a larger, thematically driven narrative that demarcated the event’s spiritual and temporal causes as well as its consequences”,⁹⁹ go well beyond what a bishop could achieve in his letters, homilies, or hymns. As in the case of Theodoret, the bishop’s only recourse was to write a church history to explain the events of his time to suit his theological programme. We may posit that the eschatological interpretation of disasters, natural and otherwise, which, as we have already said, was in vogue from around the beginning of the sixth century, could also not be reflected within the limited scope of episcopal letters, although we might have expected bishops to feel responsible in some way, even tangentially, for interpreting the *Zeitgeist* for their correspondents, whether clerical, monastic, or lay. Again, with the exception of the *Festal Letters* of Cyril of Alexandria, in those few episcopal letters that do relate to natural disasters, the sin-and-punishment syndrome does not appear. If we are to assume that bishops’ responses to crises that had an eschatological tenor were confined to the liturgical sphere, then there are precious few examples of that either.¹⁰⁰ More than once we have mentioned the hymns of Severus of Antioch on earthquakes; after that we

⁹⁹ “Interpreting Catastrophe”, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Examples include Leo I’s *Homily* 84 on the anniversary of the sack of Rome by Alaric, in which Leo attributes the sparing of citizens to the protection of the saints in whose shrines Christians and others took refuge; and the Rogations in Gaul on the occasion of the Visigothic invasions.

have to wait for liturgical evidence until the seventh century for four homilies on plague from the Toledo homiliary, which seem to have been kept on hand as pieces that were expected to be of use in future outbreaks of pestilence.¹⁰¹

CONCLUSION

Unfortunately we shall have to conclude this chapter on a negative note, quite opposed to the optimistic outlook voiced by Telelis in 2007, as follows: “The study of texts from the vast Byzantine bodies of epistolography and rhetoric is expected to contribute towards the elucidation of problems related to the perception of weather and, generally, nature by the Byzantines.”¹⁰² While we cannot vouch for the worth of rhetorical texts or letters from the middle and later Byzantine period on the topic of natural disasters, and it was outside Telelis’ brief in his article to deal with western evidence, it is abundantly obvious that, for a number of possible and probable reasons, surviving fifth- and sixth-century letters from the East as well as the West, episcopal or otherwise, are disappointing sources both in terms of quantity and content with regard to the knowledge and management of weather-events and natural disasters.

CASE-STUDIES OF NATURAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Case-Study 1. *Cyril of Alexandria (412–444)*

It is well known that the *Festal* or *Paschal Letters* emanating annually from the patriarchate of Alexandria were homilies couched in letter form, read out and studied either in Greek or Coptic in churches and monasteries. Their primary purpose was ostensibly to determine and announce well in advance to the churches and monasteries of Egypt the dates of the forthcoming seasons of Lent, Easter and Pentecost. However, relying on their monolithic power, the Alexandrian patriarchs often used these communications to pronounce authoritatively on matters of orthodoxy, church discipline, and

¹⁰¹ Trans. by A. Langenwalter in Kulikowski, “Spanish Plague in Late Antiquity”, in ed. Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, pp. 150–170. See Kulikowski, p. 156, on the assumption that the homilies were kept as a resource.

¹⁰² “Weather and Climate as Factors”, p. 462.

other current issues.¹⁰³ The reading out of these *Festal Letters* in a liturgical context has rightly been equated with a mass media event.¹⁰⁴ 29 of Cyril's *Festal Letters* have survived to us from his long patriarchate (412–444), the most complete surviving collection of these pieces from any patriarch of Alexandria in Late Antiquity.¹⁰⁵

At the outset of his patriarchate Cyril was concerned to establish his authority over against that of his uncle and predecessor, Theophilus (385–412), as well as against pagans, Jews, Novatians and tacitly Arians, and these preoccupations are reflected in his *Festal Letters*.¹⁰⁶ However, in his seventh *Festal Letter*, dating from 419, the patriarch's attention turned to other issues. In the beginning of the *Festal Letter* the patriarch uses the usual themes of putting into port and fastening the cables, the trumpet blast that announced the beginning of the Lenten fast, the necessity of excising bad habits by adhering to the fast and the duty of loving God and neighbour, before denouncing feral behaviour that degrades human nature. It becomes clear immediately that he has a particular form of feral behaviour in mind, namely the gang violence approximating fratricide that is in vogue in Egypt. Addressing the peasants of the country, the patriarch claims that, now when the crops are ready for harvesting,

¹⁰³ On the genre of the *Festal Letter* see J. Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. 3, *The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature From the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon* (Utrecht 1950; repr. Westminster 1988), pp. 52–55 (on Athanasius' *Festal Letters*); M.F.A. Brok, "À propos des lettres festales", *VC* 5 (1951), pp. 101–110; A. Külzer, "Die 'Festbriefe' (*Epistolai heortastikai*)—Eine wenig beachtete Untergattung der byzantinischen Briefliteratur", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 91 (1998), pp. 370–390; P. Allen, "Cyril of Alexandria's *Festal Letters*. The Politics of Religion", in eds. D. Luckensmeyer, P. Allen, *Studies of Religion and Politics in the Early Christian Centuries*, *Early Christian Studies* 13 (Strathfield, 2010), pp. 195–210, esp. pp. 196–201, with lit.

¹⁰⁴ By K. Banev, "Pastoral Polemics. A Rhetorical Analysis of Theophilus of Alexandria's Letters in the First Origenist Controversy", DPhil diss. Cambridge, 2007, pp. xii–xiii. We are grateful to the author for allowing us to use his work before its publication.

¹⁰⁵ These are found in PG 77, 401–981 (*CPG* 5240). New text, French trans. in progress by Évieux (†) et al., eds., SC 372, SC 392 and SC 434. Eng. trans. of this edition is in progress in trans. P.R. Amidon, intro. J.J. O'Keefe, *St. Cyril of Alexandria. Festal Letters 1–12*, *FOTC* 118 (Washington, DC, 2009). All but the *Letters* for the years 413, 443 and 444 have come down to us. Cyril was enthroned on 14 October 412, probably too late to compose the *Letter* for the following year. On his first letter see A. Camplani, A. Martin, "Lettres festales et listes épiscopales dans l'Église d'Alexandrie et d'Égypte. À propos de la liste épiscopale accompagnant la première lettre festale de Cyrille d'Alexandrie conservée en copte", *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 30 (2000), pp. 7–20. Évieux, SC 372, p. 46, speculates that either Theophilus' final *Letter* had already been dispatched, or else that Cyril gave a short communication announcing the dates of Lent, Easter and Pentecost for 413. It is difficult to say why the *Festal Letters* for 443 and 444 have not survived in an otherwise well-preserved collection.

¹⁰⁶ On these preoccupations of Cyril see further Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 39–45, where she deals with Cyril's *Festal Letters*, mostly those from 414–418.

the inhabitants of the land have cast shame upon their own joy, since some of them have turned to killing, and have made the fruitful earth drunk on human blood; they have raised the fratricidal sword against each other, and that iron which is so good for husbandry, and for that reason especially was created by God, they have made the instrument of the worst impiety.¹⁰⁷

This behaviour, continues Cyril, has angered God to the extent that he has caused a natural disaster: the crops have been destroyed by fire, and Egypt, the granary of the world, is subjected to famine and her people reduced to finding bread by the wayside that is hardly edible. This gives rise to a quotation from Lamentations 1:11: *All her people groan as they search for bread*, and from Lamentations 4:4–5: *The tongue of the sucking child clove to the roof of its mouth for thirst. The little children asked for bread, and there was none to break it for them*. Finally, Cyril expresses the divine anger in the present circumstances by the fact that the Egyptian people *have sown much but harvested little* (Hag 1:6).¹⁰⁸ In a brutal application of the sin-and-punishment syndrome, the patriarch demands repentance from those to whom he is writing, ordering bishops, clergy and abbots of monasteries to enjoin the Egyptian people to seek God's compassion through observance of the Lenten fast.

The feral behaviour of the Egyptians alleged in Cyril's seventh *Festal Letter* purportedly did not go away. In his *Festal Letter* of the following year, following the customary imagery of sailing and trumpets and general injunctions to love, the patriarch once again addresses the problem of violence in Egyptian communities. The same strategy is adduced as in the *Festal Letter* of 419, namely the accusation that iron implements designated for the production of bountiful crops are deployed by farmers to murder their neighbours. Almost as a precursor to eco-theology, Cyril fulminates:

How can you then not blush to treat unjustly the things that have given you life's necessities? Down goes your murder victim, and you empurple the earth with innocent blood. How can you still entreat her to become the mother of your crops, when you wrong her so mercilessly?¹⁰⁹

This time, however, the patriarch alleges that it is hail that has devastated the soon-to-be-harvested crops, although the extent of the damage varied

¹⁰⁷ *Festal Letter* 7.2; eds. Éviex et al., vol. 2, p. 42, 69–76 (PG 77, 548A); trans. Amidon, O'Keefe, p. 132.

¹⁰⁸ *Festal Letter* 7.2; eds. Éviex et al., vol. 2, p. 42, 86–100 (PG 77, 548A–C); cf. trans. in Amidon, O'Keefe, p. 133.

¹⁰⁹ *Festal Letter* 8.3; eds. Éviex et al., vol. 2, p. 80, 22–26 (PG 77, 561C); trans. Amidon, O'Keefe, p. 143.

from one town to another.¹¹⁰ The readers and listeners of Cyril's *Festal Letters* are anew referred to Scripture to ascertain the reasons behind this natural disaster, although the argumentation from the sin-and-punishment syndrome is already abundantly obvious, and to seek God's compassion for their evil deeds. The rest of the *Letter* is taken up with christological arguments against Arians and others.

As far as we can ascertain, there are no other reports of gang violence or natural disasters from fire and hail in Egypt during the years 419–420.¹¹¹ It may be that in exaggeration Cyril is using local natural disasters that happened on a small scale to reinforce his authoritative call to all Egyptians for Lenten repentance.

Case-Study 2. *Theodoret of Cyrrhus* (423–c. 466)

From Theodoret of Cyrrhus, who died between 460 and 466, we have 232 surviving letters, whereas the fourteenth-century ecclesiastical historian, Nicephorus Callistus, had access to over 500 of them—still not the total output, one may surmise, of a controversial and influential theologian and bishop.¹¹²

Letters 42–47, XVII and XX, which Tomkins has convincingly dated to 445 and 446,¹¹³ demonstrate Theodoret's involvement with the people of Cyrrhestica who were struggling to pay their taxation to the state in money and kind (*iugatio*). These eight letters were sent to a variety of high-placed addressees, including the empress Pulcheria, and in them Theodoret pulls out all rhetorical stops, depicting his region and its population in a pitiful light in order to effect a reduction in the tax. He claims that the region is mountainous and infertile, an exaggeration from which it does not follow that food-shortages have caused the plight of the farmers.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless,

¹¹⁰ *Festal Letter* 8.3; eds. Éviéux et al., vol. 2, p. 86, 81–104 (PG 77, 564C–565A); cf. trans. in Amidon, O'Keefe, pp. 144–145.

¹¹¹ There is also nothing pertaining to such events in Egypt during these year registered in either Telelis, Μετεωρολογικά φαινόμενα, or Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, ad loc.

¹¹² Letters designated by Roman numerals belong to the *Collectio Sakkelionis* (Azéma, vol. 1); those designated by Arabic numerals belong to the *Collectio Sirmondiana* (Azéma, vol. 2). On Theodoret's correspondence see the lit. cited in Chapter 3, Case-study 4, n. 119 above. On Theodoret's career see T. Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus. The Bishop and the Holy Man* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2002).

¹¹³ Tomkins, "Problems of Dating and Pertinence", pp. 184–189, 194.

¹¹⁴ See Tomkins, "Problems of Dating and Pertinence", p. 182 n. 27, on the exaggeration; on Theodoret's recourses to rhetoric see Spadavecchia, "The Rhetorical Tradition"; Schor, *Theodoret's People*, pp. 158–159 (specifically on Theodoret's rhetorical tactics in the debate over the *iugatio*).

some scholars have detected a connection between the eight letters concerning the *iugatio* and another two that do seem to relate to poor harvests and food-shortages, *Letters* XVIII and 23, which we shall deal with in what follows.¹¹⁵

Theodoret addresses both these short letters to Areobindus (d. 449), a local landowner: *Letter* XVIII to him as *patricius* and *Letter* 23 as *magister militum per Orientem*. From the use of these different titles there are implications for dating, which need concern us here only to the extent that the letters can be assigned to the period between 423 and 434.¹¹⁶ In the former letter, the bishop appeals to Areobindus for mercy on the grounds that, because of crop failure over a period of two years, the farmers of the region are unable to meet their commitment to pay him a tax-in-kind consisting of olive oil.

... I greet Your Magnificence by letter and beg that the place called Sergitha (it is part of our diocese), which is under your control, may enjoy your kindness. For the amount of oil that the local farmers have to contribute is ruining them, because neither last year nor this has the land produced crops, or extremely little.¹¹⁷

The bishop claims that he has been repeatedly annoyed by the farmers with demands that he intercede with Areobindus. In *Letter* 23 the bishop points out to the *patricius* the advantages pertaining to rich people who help the poor. It is again a question of a food-shortage, and Areobindus is urged towards a generosity that presumably takes the form of reducing the oil tax.

Since, then, the Master has inflicted us with scourges this year—much fewer than our sins, but nevertheless sufficient to distress the farmers—I recently informed Your Magnificence about this through your labourers, have pity, I beg you, on those who work the land, who have put in the work but have reaped a paltry harvest.¹¹⁸

Hahn linked *Letter* XVIII to the *iugatio* debate,¹¹⁹ while Martindale and Azéma connected *Letter* 23 with Theodoret's efforts to revise the *iugatio*.¹²⁰ However, as Tomkins perceived,¹²¹ we are dealing here with two very different sets of circumstances: with the *iugatio* it is a case of an imperial tax

¹¹⁵ Ed. Azéma, vol. 1, pp. 89–90 and vol. 2, p. 23, respectively.

¹¹⁶ For the arguments see Tomkins, "Problems of Dating and Pertinence", pp. 193–195.

¹¹⁷ Azéma, vol. 1, p. 90, 1–6. Our translation.

¹¹⁸ Azéma, vol. 2, p. 81, 7–13. Our translation.

¹¹⁹ I. Hahn, "Theodoretus Cyrus und die frühbyzantinische Besteuerung", *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 10 (1962), pp. 123–130 at p. 123 n. 2, p. 126 with n. 15.

¹²⁰ *PLRE* 2, pp. 145–146, s.v. Fl. Ariobindus 2; Azéma, vol. 2, p. 80 n. 1.

¹²¹ "Problems of Dating and Pertinence", p. 183.

which perhaps has been oppressive for some time and not induced by natural disasters, while in *Letters* XVIII and 23, where the farmers are to pay their local landlord rent in oil, there seems to be genuine hardship caused by two successive years of crop failure.

In surviving episcopal correspondence from the fifth and sixth centuries, these two letters of Theodoret are unique in documenting the pastoral concern of a bishop in the face of the hardship of local farmers and advocating an alleviation of their plight. Neither food-shortage is catalogued in Stathakopoulos, who, however, does record a possible famine and epidemic in Telanissos, east of Antioch in the 440s (?), which is reported in Theodoret's *Historia religiosa*.¹²²

The hardship resulting from crop-failure is not attributed by Theodoret, as it is by Cyril, to divine displeasure or a sin-and-punishment syndrome based on specific transgressions, but to climatic conditions and the fact that poor tenant farmers had no resources to withstand the shortage—a not uncommon event especially after successive crop failures.¹²³

¹²² *Famine and Pestilence*, nr. 55, pp. 232–233. Also registered as nr. 82 in Telelis, *Μετωρολογικά φαινόμενα*, vol. 1, pp. 159–160.

¹²³ See Stathakopoulos, *Famine and Pestilence*, p. 55, who calculates that in the Mediterranean during this period there was a food-shortage every 3.3 years.

CHAPTER FIVE

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES AND VIOLENCE

INTRODUCTION

In contrast to the dearth of information available on natural disasters in Chapter 4, on the topic of religious conflict we face an embarrassment of riches in the epistolary sources from all regions. The fifth and sixth centuries were riven by religious controversy within the eastern and western churches, and between the two, much of it generated by mixed responses to the Council of Chalcedon in 451. In this chapter we give a brief survey of the epistolary evidence on main “heresies” and schisms, starting with Nestorianism and Eutychianism, and the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. A lengthy and often heated exchange of letters between the main players preceded each council. The aftermath of the councils culminated in the Acacian schism, which saw the bishops of Rome and Constantinople breaking communion with each other for 35 years. In the sixth century the condemnation of three eastern bishops and their works engendered the Three Chapters controversy,¹ which was dealt with at the Council of Constantinople II. Neo-Chalcedonianism, Origenism, apthartodocetism, agnoetism and tritheism were also subjects of controversy that troubled the eastern churches in the sixth century. The origins of the more regional problems of Arianism (Gaul, Italy, North Africa and Spain), Donatism (North Africa), Pelagianism (North Africa, Italy and Gaul), Priscillianism (Spain) and Manicheism (North Africa, Italy) pre-date our period of interest, so our discussion of them will focus on episcopal letters illustrating their status from 410 to 590.

A glaring limitation of the surviving epistolary evidence is its strong bias towards the orthodox view on any given controversy. Bishops of Rome are over-represented in the surviving correspondence, due to their self-appointed role as scourgers of heresy, and the fortunate preservation of much of their correspondence with other bishops, although of course it only presents the Roman point of view. Notwithstanding the limitations

¹ This is also dealt with in Chapter 3, “Exile, Flight, Confinement”, in relation to the exile of Vigilius of Rome.

inherent in the evidence, we attempt to show both the success with which a bishop could use letters to influence the course of a doctrinal controversy, the use of letters in council *acta* and the practical constraints imposed by the epistolary medium.

The problems caused for bishops by religious controversies were not just theological and political: they entailed the persecution, often violent, of the non-orthodox, as well as violent resistance from the non-orthodox themselves, as we will see in the case of the violence of Egyptian and Palestinian monks in the wake of the Council of Chalcedon. The complex interrelations between the ideas and *personae* of the various controversies also made life difficult for bishops. Add to this the logistical problems imposed by the shortfalls of the imperial postal system, and religious controversies become a real test of episcopal crisis management skills. Our first case-study will treat the *Codex encyclius*, a dossier of documents circulated by Emperor Leo in the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon. The fall-out from Chalcedon continued right up until the end of the sixth century and beyond, eventually affecting the unity of the anti-Chalcedonian party, as our second case-study on the “monophysite” documents will show.

CYRIL AND NESTORIUS: AN UNFORTUNATE PAIRING

Nestorius, a Syrian monk and disciple of Theodore of Mopsuestia, came to the patriarchate of Constantinople in 428 ill-prepared for the political intrigues in which he was about to be embroiled. The rivalry between the sees of Alexandria and Constantinople had been sharpened by the elevation of New Rome as second in honour to Old Rome by the second Ecumenical Council, held at Constantinople (381 CE). Theophilus of Alexandria had taken a big stick to another Antiochene patriarch of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, and forced him into exile, first in 403 and again in 404. Theophilus' nephew and successor to the patriarchate, Cyril of Alexandria (412–444), was unimpressed by the choice of another Antiochene candidate in 428, the monk Nestorius. Nestorius did not help himself by quickly getting several Christian factions offside in his own see: the Arians, Quartodecimans, Novatianists and Macedonians were all violently evicted from their churches in Constantinople as part of his attempt to root out “heresy”.

Nestorius added fuel to the fire being prepared for him by endorsing the preaching of a young priest against the application of the title of “mother of God” (Greek *Theotokos*, literally “the God-bearer”) to the Virgin Mary. The historian Socrates reports that in the course of a sermon Nestorius' protégé

Anastasius made the following incendiary pronouncement in Constantinople: “Let no man call Mary the mother of God, for Mary was human and it is impossible that God could be born from a human being.”² Given that the term “God-bearer” had been used of Mary by such authorities as Origen, Athanasius, Eusebius of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus, Nestorius’ support for the priest Anastasius was bound to cause a scandal. Cyril, a seasoned political operator, seized the opportunity to attack his rival and greatly exaggerated the offence of Nestorius, falsely accusing him of Apollinarianism and Pelagianism. He made his offensive in a series of letters to Pope Celestine, Nestorius and the imperial court, accompanied by “gifts” meant to sway Theodosius’ opinion.³ As Lim comments, “These letters did not help to resolve the conflict. Indeed, the wide publicity attending the reception of these controversial and polemical documents tended to make the dispute more intractable.”⁴ The newly-elected patriarch of Constantinople was in no position to defend himself. In his *Bazaar of Heraclides* 228,⁵ Nestorius claimed that he could not understand what Cyril meant by the term “hypostatic union” in relation to the incarnate Christ, which term Nestorius interpreted in the outdated Nicene sense of “real being”, the equivalent of *ousia*. Cyril was actually using *hypostasis* in the new sense adopted by the Council of Constantinople in 381 to mean “differentiated subject”.⁶ Nestorius’ theological position on the divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ was informed by the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia, that there was not a personal union in Christ but “a union of different things in close relation” (*henōsis schetikē*), a position that came dangerously close to the division of Christ into two *hypostases* or persons.⁷ Cyril saw a link between what he perceived as Nestorian “adoptionism”—i.e. the doctrine that God the Father merely adopted the human Jesus as his son, having foreseen his merits—and the Pelagian theory that Christ was simply a moral example for humankind, rather than its saviour.⁸

² “θεοτόκον τὴν Μαρίαν καλεῖτω μηδεὶς· Μαρία γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἦν, ὑπὸ ἀνθρώπου δὲ θεὸν τεχθῆναι ἀδύνατον.” Socrates, *HE* 7.32.2; ed. Hansen, GCS NF 1, p. 380; eds. Hansen, Maraval, SC 506, p. 114.

³ The subject of Cyril’s “gifts” to the imperial court is taken up in Chapter 6, Social Abuses.

⁴ R. Lim, *Public Disputation, Power, and Social Order in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1995), p. 220.

⁵ Ed. F. Nau, *Le livre de Héraclide de Damas* (Paris, 1910), p. 138.

⁶ J. McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria: the Christological Controversy, Its History, Theology, and Texts*, Supplements to VC 23 (Leiden, 1994), pp. 148–149.

⁷ See McGuckin, *Cyril*, pp. 151–174, on associative difference in Christ.

⁸ See section on Pelagianism below.

The increasingly-heated correspondence between Cyril and Nestorius has been the subject of intense scrutiny in recent scholarship,⁹ which we will not rehearse here. Appended to Cyril's third letter to Nestorius was a list of *anathemata* (known as the *Twelve Chapters*). These curses on the works and person of Nestorius, and those who accepted his writings, were widely circulated and caused outrage among the party of John of Antioch.¹⁰ The Council of Ephesus was convened in 431 to settle the dispute, and Cyril took the uncanonical step of opening the conference before the arrival of the oriental party. This rash action, which showed utter disrespect for the see of Antioch, caused Cyril to be confined to house-arrest for a brief period during the council. Upon his release, Cyril gave a persuasive defence of his position to the bishops assembled at the council, including an explanation of the *Twelve Chapters*,¹¹ and succeeded in having Nestorius condemned and exiled.¹² However, the christological issue was not yet put to rest, and neither were the violence and unrest leading up to the Council of Ephesus.¹³

EUTYCHES: LETTERS READ AND NOT READ

Cyril was to find an unlikely champion in the person of the monk Eutyches, archimandrite of Constantinople. Eutyches' initial success was at least partly due to his capacity to represent himself in a favourable light in letters to the people who mattered, among them Leo of Rome. The pope had received information from the abbot concerning his attempts to suppress Nestorian resistance to his own views on the incarnation. Leo, unaware of how radical were Eutyches' views, congratulated him for his concern in this

⁹ E.g. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria, Select Letters*; T. Graumann, "'Reading' the First Council of Ephesus (431)", in eds. R. Price, Ma. Whitby, *Chalcedon in Context: Church Councils 400–700*, Contexts 1 (Liverpool, 2009), pp. 27–44; G.A. Bevan, "The Case of Nestorius: Ecclesiastical Politics in the East, 428–451 CE", DPhil. diss., Toronto, 2005. Cyril's *Letter 2* to Nestorius (*Ep.* 4, ACO 1/1, pp. 25–28) and *Letter 3* to Nestorius (*Ep.* 17, ACO 1/1, pp. 33–42) are translated by McGuckin, *Cyril*, pp. 262–265, 266–275; as is Nestorius' reply to Cyril's *Letter 2* (ACO 1/1, pp. 29–32), at pp. 364–368.

¹⁰ See A. Louth, "Why Did the Syrians Reject the Council of Chalcedon?", in eds. Price, Whitby, *Chalcedon in Context*, pp. 107–116.

¹¹ The text of his *Explanation of the Twelve Chapters*, which includes the original twelve *anathemata*, is translated in McGuckin, *Cyril*, pp. 282–293.

¹² See our treatment of Nestorius' exile in Case-study 1 of Chapter 3 above.

¹³ T.E. Gregory, *Vox Populi: Popular Opinion and Violence in the Religious Controversies in the Fifth Century AD* (Columbus, OH, 1979), pp. 100–108. See also T. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam*, Divinations: Rereading Late Ancient Religion (Philadelphia, PA, 2009), which goes down to the eighth century.

matter, and promised to pursue the elimination of the “heinous poison” of Nestorianism.¹⁴ In December of the same year, Eutyches, by now condemned by the synod of Constantinople held in November, appealed to Leo for help (*Ep.* 21). Leo wrote at once to Flavian, patriarch of Constantinople, in some embarrassment, asking why he had not been fully informed of the scandal (*Ep.* 23). Flavian had indeed informed the pope at the end of 448 (*Ep.* 22) but his letter was delayed in transit and crossed paths with Leo’s own complaint. Thereupon Flavian sent a second letter to Leo (*Ep.* 26) outlining again Eutyches’ double error, which he claimed was derived from the heresies of Apollinaris of Laodicea and the Roman gnostic Valentine. Eutyches’ first error was his belief that before the incarnation Christ had two natures, but only one nature after the incarnation. Eutyches’ second erroneous doctrine, as described by Flavian, was that Christ assumed a body that was not of the same nature as a human body.¹⁵ Leo’s reply came in the form of a lengthy letter (*Ep.* 28), which was to be dubbed the *Tome to Flavian*.¹⁶

COUNCIL OF EPHEBUS II (449)

Around the same time as the arrival of Flavian’s second letter of complaint about Eutyches to Leo, in May 449, Theodosius II convened an ecumenical council to investigate Eutyches’ claims. The Second Council of Ephesus was to be presided over by Dioscorus of Alexandria, a Eutychian supporter and opponent of the patriarch of Constantinople. Leo’s *Tome to Flavian*, composed on 13 June 448, was presented by two papal legates and was supposed to be read aloud to the gathering of bishops at Ephesus in August 449. Dioscorus, however, prohibited its presentation. In the course of the council, Flavian was deposed as patriarch of Constantinople, and Dioscorus’ supporter Anatolius appointed in his stead. Flavian was apparently mauled so badly afterwards that he died on his way to exile.¹⁷ Leo was furious at the outcome of the council, denouncing it as “a den of thieves” (*Latrocinium*).

¹⁴ Leo Mag., *Ep.* 20, 1 June 448; ACO 2/2.4, p. 3.

¹⁵ Flavian, *Ep. 2 ad Leonem* = *Ep.* 26, PL 54, 743B–745B. Since Christ’s body was not of human substance, it was neither consubstantial with other humans nor with the woman who bore him according to the flesh, according to Flavian.

¹⁶ The version of the *Tome to Flavian* presented in Schwartz is that preserved in the *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*: ACO 2/2.1, pp. 24–33; trans. B. Neil, *Leo the Great, The Early Church Fathers* (London, New York, 2009), pp. 96–103. It is uncertain whether Flavian actually read it before his untimely death.

¹⁷ On the episode see Chadwick, “The Exile and Death of Flavian”, pp. 17–34.

The appellation “the Robber synod” was quickly adopted by the losing side, and the *Tome to Flavian* had to wait another two years for a proper hearing.

Letters between the sees of Constantinople and Rome reveal that the relationship between the two, always fraught, degenerated rapidly after the council of 449. Theodosius II, who had upheld the decisions of the Robber Synod, refused to reopen the matter. In what he mistakenly believed to be a diplomatically-worded letter, Leo asked Theodosius to make a statement of orthodox belief and circulate it among the churches, and requested an ecumenical council to be held in Italy to resolve the question of opposition to Chalcedon.¹⁸ Fate intervened to prevent what would have been a volcanic eruption from Constantinople. In mid-450, before Leo’s letter arrived at the eastern imperial court, Theodosius met his death in a riding accident. The new emperor Marcian and his wife Pulcheria—the sister of Theodosius—were initially very well disposed towards Rome and Leo in particular, and wished to uphold his condemnation of Eutyches through the convening of a new council in the East. A new era of *rapprochement* between East and West seemed about to dawn.

In May of the following year Marcian and Pulcheria sent out a summons to all bishops of major sees to attend the Council of Chalcedon. Valentinian III and Marcian jointly requested that a council be held at Constantinople to remove “every impious error”, with the bishop of Rome (Leo I) as its author.¹⁹ While some 370 bishops made the journey to Chalcedon, as we know from the subscriptions to the council *acta*, the bishop of Rome was not amongst them. Instead he forwarded the letter he had sent earlier to Flavian of Constantinople (*Ep.* 28).

The Tome of Leo

The main achievement of the *Tome* was its succinct formulation of the unique relationship of unity between the two natures of Christ, while avoiding use of the word “one”.²⁰ Christ had a human form (by which we understand “nature”) and a divine form in such a way that “each form performs what is proper to it in communion with the other, with the Word accomplishing what is proper to the Word and the flesh fulfilling what is proper

¹⁸ Leo Mag., *Ep.* 69; PL 54, 892.

¹⁹ Valentinian III and Marcian to Leo Mag., *Ep.* 73; PL 54, 900A–B. Trans. Neil, *Leo the Great*, pp. 42–43.

²⁰ Except of course in relation to the single person of Christ, e.g. “joining in one person” (Leo Mag., *Ep.* 28.3).

to the flesh" (*Ep.* 28.2). This formula trod the middle ground between the two extremes of "one nature" christology where the humanity of Christ was dissolved in the hypostatic union (Eutychianism), and the teaching of two distinct persons in Christ, the human and the divine, each with their own nature (Nestorianism). It should be noted however that neither Nestorius nor Nestorianism is specifically mentioned in this letter. The formula also seemed to be close enough to Cyril of Alexandria's formula "one incarnate nature of God the Word" to satisfy all but the most extreme Cyrillians, the followers of Eutyches in Egypt and Palestine. According to Leo's formulation the natures were joined without confusion or mingling on the one hand (Eutychianism), and on the other hand without division and separation (Nestorianism). The *Tome* was to take on a life of its own through its inclusion in the *acta* of the Council of Chalcedon, where it was judged to be compatible with the *Twelve Chapters* of Cyril. Eutyches, out of concern to show that his exposition of the relationship between the two natures in the one person of Christ was grounded firmly in tradition, both biblical and patristic, had adduced a series of patristic textual witnesses, which included letters of Popes Julius, Felix I and Celestine. These were appended to the *Tome*.²¹ The transmission of these letters along with excerpts of other texts in the *acta* of Chalcedon is the only means by which most of these texts survive.

The *Tome* remained a standard for the bishops of Constantinople (including the exiled former bishop of Constantinople, Nestorius) and Rome in the christological controversies of the next two centuries. However, it was subject to intense criticism in the decade following Chalcedon.

CHALCEDON AND ITS AFTERMATH²²

While the *Tome* satisfied the imperial couple, who were looking for a basis for unity between the opposing factions in the East, many in Syria, Palestine and Egypt were not satisfied with it or the Council which acclaimed it. Nor was Leo satisfied with the *acta* of Chalcedon, due to its reinforcement of the principle that New Rome was the equal of Old Rome in ecclesiastical

²¹ ACO 2/2.1, pp. 35–42.

²² For the *acta* of the council see ACO 2/2, parts 1, 2; trans. Price, Gaddis, *Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*, vols. 2 and 3. On the council and its reception see in general Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 93–235.

affairs.²³ For this reason Leo refused to ratify the *acta* with his signature, in the knowledge that written endorsement by the patriarchs of Constantinople and Rome was crucial to any council's claim to ecumenical status. The opponents of Chalcedon regarded the resolution reached at Chalcedon as a betrayal of both Cyril and Eutyches. Much of their energetic opposition was focussed on discrediting the *Tome*. In Palestine, and later in Alexandria, the monastic reaction to the *Definition of Faith* and the canons approved at Chalcedon was violent. In a letter to Julian of Cóos,²⁴ Leo denounces the "false monks" for the riots that spread from Jerusalem to the whole of Palestine after Theodosius (also a monk) returned from Chalcedon supporting one-nature christology. Anti-Chalcedonian monks had killed Severian, bishop of Scythopolis, and threatened to do the same to Juvenal, bishop of Jerusalem, who had saved his skin by fleeing into exile. Leo roundly condemned their violence and ignorance, likening them to soldiers of the anti-Christ.²⁵

In a more conciliatory letter to the Palestinian monks in the following year (*Ep.* 124), Leo gives an explicit condemnation of Nestorius. In a significant departure from *Letter* 28, Leo reverted in *Letter* 124 to his original, pre-449, terminology of "substances" in Christ, since talk of two "natures" in Christ might appear to have Nestorian resonances, if it were read as implying two persons in Christ.²⁶ Leo's *Letter* 124 was later reworked as *Letter* 165 to Emperor Leo, a document which came to be known as the *Second Tome*, and which reinstates the "nature" terminology of the *Tome*.²⁷ The *Second Tome* is curiously preserved in an anti-Chalcedonian compilation of episcopal letters that includes many letters of Cyril, Nestorius, John of Antioch, Theodoret and others,²⁸ along with Leo's long list of excerpts from various

²³ Canon 28; ed. Tanner, p. 100.

²⁴ Julian acted an occasional legate to Constantinople, not an agent of the pope in permanent residence there. His knowledge of Greek was of great advantage to the bishop of Rome.

²⁵ *Ep.* 109.2 (= *Ep.* 105; ACO 2/4, p. 137, 22–24): 'superbi autem et inquieti, qui sacerdotum contemptu et iniuriis gloriantur, non serui Christi, sed antichristi milites sunt habendi maximeque in suis sunt praepositis humiliandi, qui inperitam multitudinem ad defensionem suae peruersitatis instigant.' "But these insolent disturbers (of the peace), who boast of their insults and injuries to priests, are to be considered not servants of Christ, but soldiers of the Antichrist, and must be chiefly brought low through their leaders, who incite the ignorant mob to defend their insubordination." Our translation.

²⁶ P.L. Barclift, "The Shifting Tones of Pope Leo the Great's Christological Vocabulary", *Church History* 66/2 (1997), pp. 221–239 at 227 n. 219.

²⁷ N.W. James, "Leo the Great and Prosper of Aquitaine: a Fifth-century Pope and His Advisor", *JTS* ns 44/2 (1993), pp. 554–584, at 557–558.

²⁸ See E. Schwartz, *Codex Vaticanus gr. 1431: eine antichalkedonische Sammlung aus der Zeit Kaiser Zenos*, Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-philolog. und hist. Klasse 32/6 (Munich, 1927).

authors to demonstrate that what he had said in the *Tome* had already been said before, in both Latin and Greek.²⁹

Unfortunately Pope Leo's letters did not prevent more violence in Alexandria over Patriarch Proterius' adherence to Chalcedon. Proterius, ordained in place of Dioscorus in 452 after the latter's deposition at Chalcedon, was charged with Nestorianism by the supporters of Cyril.³⁰ Many felt that Proterius had betrayed the memory of his predecessor by omitting his name from the diptychs. The anti-Chalcedonians had to bide their time until the death of Emperor Marcian in early 457, whereupon, under the leadership of Timothy Aelurus and his associate Peter Mongus, they besieged the Alexandrian patriarch in church on Easter Day. Proterius was put to the sword in a baptistery and his corpse dragged around the city streets on a rope before being dismembered and burnt, after which Timothy Aelurus was illegitimately installed as patriarch. This is the account presented by Evagrius,³¹ and supported by two letters of Pope Leo.³² According to Liberatus of Carthage, Proterius died on Holy Thursday, 28 March 457, twelve days *after* Timothy Aelurus had been chosen as patriarch.³³

Emperor Leo I lost no time in composing a questionnaire that was sent to all metropolitans of the East and West together with some prominent eastern monastic figures (457/8). Known as the *Codex encyclius* (*CEn*), this document asked the metropolitans to convene their suffragans and report on their reception of Chalcedon and the validity or otherwise of the consecration of Timothy Aelurus as patriarch of Alexandria.³⁴ The 34 letters of reply, signed by some 280 bishops and monks and possibly representing 470 of those canvassed, constitute a powerful testimony to the sovereignty of the letter in imperial and ecclesiastical interventions in religious conflict.³⁵ While most bishops expressed their agreement with the events of 451 and

²⁹ The florilegium to *Ep.* 165 (ACO 2/4, pp. 119–131) included excerpts from Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*; Athanasius, *Ep. ad Epictetum*; Ambrose, *De fide* and *De incarnatione Domini*; Ambrose, *Ep.* 46 (though not in all manuscripts); Augustine, *Ep.* 137, *Ep.* 187, *Serm.* 78; John Chrysostom, *De ascensione*, *Serm. de cruce*; Theophilus of Alexandria (as quoted by Jerome, *Ep.* 98); Cyril of Alexandria, *De incarnatione*, *Ep.* 2 *ad Nestorium*; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 13.

³⁰ Leo Mag., *Ep.* 129.2 (= *Ep.* 74; ACO 2/4, p. 85).

³¹ Evagrius, *HE* 2.8; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, pp. 55–59.

³² Leo Mag., *Epp.* 149 and 150; ACO 2/4, pp. 97–98.

³³ Liberatus of Carthage, *Breviarium* 15; ed. J. Garnier (Paris, 1675; repr. Piscataway, NJ, 2010); cited by C.B. Horn, *Asceticism and Christological Controversy in Fifth-century Palestine: The Career of Peter the Iberian*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford, 2006), pp. 95–96.

³⁴ Authoritative on the *CEn* is Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 195–235.

³⁵ Text in Latin translation in ACO 2/5, pp. 9–98.

responded negatively to the case of Timothy Aelurus, the overriding sentiment in the letters is belief in the imperial church and the pre-eminence of the Council of Nicaea in 325.³⁶ This dossier is the subject of Case-study 1 below.

After replacing Proterius, Timothy Aelurus had broken off communion with Rome, Constantinople and Antioch, denouncing all the pro-Chalcedonian bishops of Alexandria. It appears that Timothy went on to ask the emperor to rescind the canons of Chalcedon, and to summon a new council.³⁷ In 460 Emperor Leo finally expelled Timothy from Alexandria. Even after he had been exiled to Gangra, however, Timothy sought out his supporters in Constantinople.

Meanwhile, in Antioch religious conflict and intrigue associated with the reception of Chalcedon were causing violence and instability in the patriarchal office. For the tumultuous events from about 471 to the end of Emperor Zeno's reign in 491, however, we have no evidence from episcopal letters and must rely on the church historians and chroniclers.³⁸ Zeno, himself the son-in-law of Emperor Leo I and probably an anti-Chalcedonian like his people, the Isaurians, came to Antioch as *magister militum per Orientem* in 469 in the company of a priest called Peter the Fuller. Peter's name was to be inextricably linked with the church of Antioch during this period and beyond. After usurping the patriarchal throne of the Chalcedonian incumbent, Martyrius, Peter was installed instead, inaugurating the first of no fewer than four of his non-consecutive episcopates (469–470, 470–471, 475–476 and 484–491[?]). The bishops who held the see in the intervening years alternated between adherents and opponents of Chalcedon and one of them, Bishop Stephen, a Chalcedonian, was murdered by anti-Chalcedonian clergy in 479 when he was attacked in the baptistery of the church of the Forty Martyrs, stabbed to death with sharp reeds, and thrown into the Orontes.³⁹

³⁶ See further Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 204–211.

³⁷ From Leo I's letters to Basil of Antioch, Juvenal of Jerusalem, Euxitheus, vicar of Thessalonica, Peter of Corinth and Luke of Dyrrachium (*Epp.* 149, 150).

³⁸ See the account in G. Downey, *A History of Antioch from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 484–502 for the sources.

³⁹ For the evidence of the murder see Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 489–490; on the church of the Forty Martyrs see Mayer, Allen, *The Churches of Syrian Antioch*, pp. 50, 153, 170, 185, 204.

THE ACACIAN SCHISM⁴⁰

The lead-up to the Acacian schism began with the return from exile to the see of Alexandria by the anti-Chalcedonian bishop, Timothy Aelurus, c. 475.⁴¹ Timothy had spent sixteen years in exile, until he was recalled by the usurper Basiliscus, who took the throne from Zeno in 475. As a general in 468, Basiliscus had led the unsuccessful military campaign against the Vandals in North Africa. One of his first acts as emperor was to reverse Zeno's religious policy of support for the Chalcedonian bishop of Alexandria, Timothy Salofaciolus, by publishing an edict known as the Encyclical.⁴² Timothy was driven into exile and Timothy Aelurus recalled. Aelurus travelled to Constantinople to petition the emperor for a new council which would overturn the decisions of Chalcedon. However, Zeno's return from exile and overthrow of Timothy's patron Basiliscus in August 476 cut short his comeback. Four years after being ejected from Alexandria, Timothy Salofaciolus was restored permanently to the see of Alexandria.

Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople (471–489), had initially condemned the Eutychian heretics, led by Timothy Aelurus. But in 482, the patriarch turned the tables and supported the heretical candidate Peter Mongus for the see of Alexandria, against the orthodox John of Talai. Acacius persuaded Zeno to issue an imperial edict, the *Henotikon*, a series of doctrinal statements designed to effect union between the warring factions of the eastern churches. The Council of Chalcedon was not rejected in this document, but was passed over in silence. Acacius' position was considered untenable by those committed to the Chalcedonian settlement, especially the Roman bishops. The looming schism consumed most of Pope Simplicius' (475–483) attention, to judge by his letters, 17 of which (out of 21) were directed to the East over the matter.⁴³

⁴⁰ For relevant documents from the *Collectio Veronensis* see E. Schwartz, *Publizistische Sammlungen zum acacianischen Schisma*, Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-hist. Abt. NF 10/4 (Munich, 1934), pp. 3–157.

⁴¹ See P. Blaudeau, "Timothée Aelure et la direction ecclésiastique de l'Empire post-chalcédonien", *Revue des études byzantines* 54 (1996), pp. 107–133; idem, "Rome contre Alexandrie? L'interprétation pontificale de l'enjeu monophysite (de l'émergence de la controverse eutychienne au schisme acacien 448–484)", *Adamantius* 12 (2006), pp. 140–216.

⁴² On this document, the Antencyclical which rescinded it, the *Henotikon* (treated below), and related documents see Schwartz, *Codex Vaticanus gr. 1431*. Cf. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, p. 28, for the tenor of the collection.

⁴³ See the Appendix listing papal letters sent to the East from 448 to 494, in Blaudeau, "Rome contre Alexandrie?", p. 215.

Simplicius' successor Felix III (483–492) was equally engrossed in the controversy. After a furious exchange of letters with Zeno and Acacius in the first year of his pontificate (*Epp.* 1–6), he excommunicated Acacius in a brief statement of 28 July 484 (*Ep.* 7), and was in turn excommunicated by the patriarch of Constantinople, starting a schism that was to last until 519. Acacius' short-lived successor, Fravitta (490), proved no more amenable to Roman demands than his predecessor. Likewise, papal letters—one to the people and clergy of Constantinople; one to the priests and archimandrites Rufinus and Thalassius; and another to the other priests and monks in Constantinople and Bithynia—went unheeded. In a letter to the bishops of Egypt, Felix lamented the on-going rioting in Alexandria and murder of Proterius, asking them to condemn their new patriarch and to support the deposed pro-Chalcedonian clergy.⁴⁴ Felix also sought the support of the bishops of Thessalonica, Thebes, Libya and Pentapolis, but the issue remained unresolved at his death in 492, even though Acacius by then was also dead. Pope Gelasius (492–496) took the same hard line against the former patriarch as his predecessors. Under the protection of the Ostrogothic king Theodoric, Gelasius insisted on the condemnation of Acacius as the condition for union between Rome and Constantinople, rejecting a proposed compromise in 494 which would have allowed for spiritual and canonical autonomy in theological and disciplinary matters.

The support of the bishops of the northern province of Dardania, in the contested diocese of Illyricum, was seen as crucial for the success of Rome's bid to have Acacius and the *Henotikon* condemned. In a letter of 493, Gelasius threatened the bishops of Dardania with excommunication if they persisted in communion with heretics, instructing them not to recite their names in the liturgy, and to exclude from their number anyone who did so.⁴⁵ It seems his threats were successful: the Dardanian bishops replied that they gladly accepted the Roman condemnation of Eutyches, Peter, Acacius and their followers.⁴⁶ Gelasius admonished the bishops of Dardania and Illyricum to beware the tricks of the bishop of Thessalonica who did not deserve communion with the Holy See, since he refused to omit the name of Acacius from the diptychs.⁴⁷ A further letter, to the Dardanian bishops and the bishops of Syria—who are simply designated as *episcopi*

⁴⁴ Felix III, *Ep.* 9; ed. Thiel, pp. 250–251.

⁴⁵ Gelasius, *Ep.* 7; ed. Thiel, pp. 335–337.

⁴⁶ *Ep.* 11; ed. Thiel, pp. 348–349.

⁴⁷ *Ep.* 18; ed. Thiel, pp. 383–385.

orientales—furnished a dogmatic statement as to why Acacius was properly condemned by the apostolic see.⁴⁸

Throughout the religious controversies of the fifth century, Popes Leo, Simplicius, Felix and Gelasius resorted to the same rhetorical techniques, bullying and cajoling by turn, demonizing their opponents and sermonizing about their own God-given authority over anyone who would listen.⁴⁹ The trouble with letters, though, is that it is hard to tell when the recipient is not listening, or perhaps not even bothering to read to the end of a carefully prepared argument, precariously poised on a scaffolding of scriptural and patristic exempla. A prime example of the popes' extreme indifference to the sensitivities of their audience is *Letter 1* of Gelasius to the Syrian bishops, probably written while he was still a deacon under Felix in 488 or 489,⁵⁰ and full of the brash posturing and legalistic sophistry one would expect of a new appointment to the *curia*. Even if the Latin (or its Greek translation) did not pose a problem for Zeno, the imperious tone certainly would have been hard to swallow. By the end of the sixth century, the popes simply stopped writing letters to the East, as they realised that relations with Byzantium could only be improved by avoiding direct communication.⁵¹

The crisis over the Acacian schism was inextricably linked with the conflict between bishops of Rome and Constantinople over their authority in relation to each other. The expression of the Constantinopolitan desire for equality with "Old Rome" in Canon 28 of the Council of Chalcedon had resulted in the bishop of Rome's refusal to endorse the *acta*. Gelasius' imperious address to Emperor Anastasius in 494 made a strong claim for Roman supremacy over the universal church. In *Letter 12* he introduced the famous

⁴⁸ *Ep.* 26 to the bishops of Dardania (1 February 495); *Ep.* 27 to the bishops of the East (495).

⁴⁹ On the changing rhetoric of authority in this period see C. Leyser, *Asceticism and Authority from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000).

⁵⁰ Ed. Thiel, pp. 287–311; see Thiel's comments, p. 285. Trans. Neil, Allen, *Letters of Gelasius I* (forthcoming). On the authorship of the letter see also Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, p. 293. For stylistic considerations in the question of Gelasius' authorship see H. Koch, *Gelasius im kirchenpolitischen Dienste seiner Vorgänger, der Päpste Simplicius (468–483) und Felix III. (483–492). Ein Beitrag zur Sprache des Papstes Gelasius I. (492–496) und früherer Papstbriefe* (Munich, 1935), pp. 53–58.

⁵¹ C. Sotinel, "Emperors and Popes in the Sixth Century. The Western View", in ed. M. Maas, *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 267–290. Gelasius seems to have taken a particularly negative view towards things Greek, a view later shared by Gregory I: see A.J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, 590–752 A.D.* (Lanham, MD, 2007), p. 11.

“two powers” theory, of church and king, while begging Anastasius not to let the church be torn apart by the Acacian dispute.⁵² It seems that Anastasius was not easily cowed, however, as no change was made in the eastern position on Acacius or the *Henotikon*. On 13 March 495 a Roman synod offered absolution in the basilica of St Peter to Misenus, a bishop who had openly supported the cause of Acacius.⁵³ Some 45 bishops and other notables signed the *acta* of the Roman synod, in an action that was a sure snub to Constantinople. In 495 or 496, in response to a legation from the bishops of Syria about the parlous state of the eastern church, Gelasius again sought the support of the Syrian bishops, asking them to keep faith with the Roman church (*Ep.* 43).⁵⁴

The stand-off with Constantinople continued under Pope Anastasius II (496–498), although the Roman bishop devoted four letters to bringing about peace with Constantinople. The most famous was his first effort, in which he tried to make the emperor remove the name of Acacius from the diptychs.⁵⁵ At the same time as he was attempting to persuade the emperor, Anastasius II was trying to alleviate the threat of violence from Gaul after the first military successes of the Merovingians led by Clovis. In a letter to Clovis, the bishop of Rome congratulates the king on his conversion to Christianity (albeit perhaps from homoean Christianity, which is not mentioned), flattering him by appealing to his spiritual role as protector of the church.⁵⁶ This is a good instance of heresy being ignored by Roman bishops when their safety was at stake.

During the pontificate of Symmachus the eastern bishops continued to petition Rome over the schism,⁵⁷ prompting a single letter of reply—which

⁵² Gelasius, *Ep.* 12.2; ed. Thiel, pp. 350–351. Trans. in Neil, Allen, *Letters of Gelasius I*, forthcoming.

⁵³ *Ep.* 30.2; ed. Thiel, pp. 438–439.

⁵⁴ Gelasius, *Ep.* 43 to the bishops of Syria; see also *Ep.* 7 to the bishops of Dardania; *Ep.* 10 to Succonius in Constantinople; *Ep.* 18 to the bishops of Dardania and Illyricum; *Ep.* 9 to Abbot Natalis.

⁵⁵ *Ep.* 1 to Anastasius I; ed. Thiel, pp. 615–623. On Anastasius I's ecclesiastical policies see Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, pp. 197–200; F.K. Haarer, *Anastasius I. Politics and Empire in the Late Roman World*, ARCA. Classical and Medieval Texts, Papers and Monographs 46 (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 132–136; M. Meier, *Anastasios I. Die Entstehung des Byzantinischen Reiches* (Stuttgart, 2009), pp. 116–117. The latter two works can also be consulted profitably for the reign of Emperor Anastasius I in general.

⁵⁶ Anastasius II, *Ep.* 2; ed. Thiel, p. 624. See our discussion of Clovis' baptism in Chapter 5, “Arianism” above.

⁵⁷ *Ep.* 12 to Symmachus, penned by Dorotheus of Thessalonica in 512; ed. Thiel, pp. 709–717.

may have been penned by Ennodius of Pavia.⁵⁸ The letter was a blunt refusal ever to admit to his communion those who would not divorce themselves from association with the condemned, namely Eutyches, Dioscorus, Timothy Aelurus, Peter Mongus and Acacius. Symmachus' energies were largely consumed by the Laurentian schism ensuing from his disputed election,⁵⁹ and he did not concern himself greatly with affairs of theological import in the eastern churches. His successor Hormisdas (514–523) took a much greater interest in resolving the stalemate, and negotiations were resumed in 515, although Emperor Anastasius took the initiative at this stage, not Hormisdas.⁶⁰ Hormisdas sent two embassies to Anastasius, with the backing of King Theodoric. The second embassy carried nineteen letters confirming the faith as it was defined by the Council of Chalcedon, and condemning Eutychianism. Orthodox monks were secretly employed to disseminate these letters in the East. Anastasius' successor Justin proved willing to reach a compromise with Hormisdas, acting for Theodoric, and the schism ended in 519, although the anti-Chalcedonian factions led by the excommunicated Severus of Antioch remained strong.

WESTERN HERESIES

Arianism

The term "Arianism" is used here to distinguish the Nicene Christianity of the mainstream church from the homoean Christianity adopted by followers of Arius, an Alexandrian priest (313–316). First condemned at the Council of Nicaea in 325, the sect was given a huge boost by the support of Emperor Constantius II (337–361), which only the concerted efforts of several eastern councils could counter. Even Felix II, bishop of Rome (355–365) enjoyed a brief spell of Arianism before changing his mind. The *LP* only recounts that Felix condemned Constantius as a heretic and was subsequently beheaded.⁶¹ After the renewed condemnation of Arianism at the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381, letters of patriarchs of Constantinople record hardly any Arian activity, although Arians remained in

⁵⁸ Symmachus, *Ep. 13 ad orientales*, dated 8 Oct 512; ed. Thiel, pp. 717–722.

⁵⁹ Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority*, gives the best recent treatment of these events.

⁶⁰ Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, p. 97.

⁶¹ *LP* 1, p. 211. Given that Constantius died four years before Felix he could hardly have been instrumental in the pope's death; cf. *LP* 1, pp. 207–208, where Felix is said to have been deposed and to have died peacefully.

the capital until at least 428.⁶² It remained largely a western problem in the fifth and sixth centuries, with the advent of the Germanic tribes into Gaul, Italy, North Africa and Spain. Augustine expressed his grave concerns in *Letters* 185, 238, 239 and 241. The arrival of Arian Vandals in Africa caused a knock-on effect in neighbouring eastern provinces, as we saw above in our discussion of Theodoret of Cyrrhus' many letters of recommendation for African refugees.⁶³

Non-Arian Christians in North Africa, especially in *Africa proconsularis*, were persecuted under the Arian Vandal king Geiseric from 429.⁶⁴ The catholic episcopate was not restored in North Africa for 74 years. Fulgentius, ordained bishop of Ruspe c. 507, was exiled with other catholic bishops by the Vandal king Thrasamund to Sardinia. He was permitted to return to Carthage to dispute with the king over Arianism but then sent into a second exile on Sardinia for another four years.⁶⁵ When in 523 Thrasamund died and was replaced as Vandal king by the more favourably inclined Hilderic, Fulgentius and the other exiled bishops in Sardinia were allowed to return to Africa. After the Byzantine reconquest of North Africa, Justinian issued an edict proscribing Arians along with Donatists and Jews in 535.⁶⁶ In Alexandria the patriarch Cyril used his *Festal Letters* to attack Arians, among other heretical foes.⁶⁷ Agapitus of Rome (535–536) wrote two letters on the Arian heresy in North Africa soon after his consecration in May 535. In the first,⁶⁸ he congratulates the African bishops on avoiding the heretics and replies to the questions they had asked his predecessor John II.⁶⁹ In another letter of the same year Agapitus encouraged Reparatus of Carthage to make known to others what he had written to him so that no one could plead

⁶² Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (428–431), violently evicted Arians (as well as Quartodecimans, Novatianists and Macedonians) from their churches in Constantinople as part of his crusade against heresy in the imperial capital.

⁶³ Theodoret, *Epp.* 11, 12, 22, 23, 29–36, 52, 53 and 70. See Chapter 3, Case-study 4.

⁶⁴ P. Heather, "Christianity and the Vandals in the Reign of Geiseric", in eds. J. Drinkwater, B. Salway, *Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected: Essays Presented by Colleagues, Friends and Pupils*, Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement (London, 2007), pp. 137–146.

⁶⁵ See Lapeyre, *Saint Fulgence*, pp. 156–159. See Case-study 2 on Fulgentius in exile in Chapter 3 above.

⁶⁶ Justinian, *Novella* 37.5 and 37.8, issued on 1 August 535; eds. R. Schoell et al., *Corpus iuris civilis*, vol. 3, *Novellae*, 13th ed. (Berlin, 1963), p. 245.

⁶⁷ E.g. *Festal Letter* 8.3; eds. Éviex et al., vol. 2, p. 86, 81–104 (PG 77, 564C–565A); cf. trans. in Amidon, O'Keefe, pp. 144–145. See further Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria*, pp. 39–45.

⁶⁸ *Ep.* 3 to Reparatus, bishop of Carthage, Florentinianus, Datianus and other African bishops (CPL 1615), ed. Günther, CSEL 35, 330–347 = PL 66, cols. 43–45. Date: fifth Ides of October or November 535.

⁶⁹ CPL 1614.

ignorance of what the apostolic see had said about the catholic faith. The strategy of making a local head bishop responsible for disseminating Roman views on a given subject was used frequently.⁷⁰

In Italy, the seriousness of the Arian threat first became obvious upon the arrival of the Gothic troops led by Alaric in 408, culminating in August 410 with a three-day siege that saw the wholesale destruction of the city. In the 430s until the 450s it continued to loom large on Roman bishops' horizons, with the invasion of Northern Italy by Attila the Hun and the siege of the city by the Vandal Gaiseric in 455. Pope Leo's preaching shows that he was concerned that the people of Rome embrace orthodox Christianity and not the Arianism of the Goths and Vandals.⁷¹ In his letters, however, the Arians barely make an appearance. One exception is his comparison of Priscillians with Arians, according to a typically spurious genealogy of heresy.⁷² Similarly, during the Acacian schism, the letter of a Roman synod stated that Peter Fuller was guilty of the heresies of Valentinus, Mani, Arius, Sabelius, Apollinaris and Eutyches.⁷³ Compare this with Gelasius' pragmatism in his dealings with the Arian Ostrogothic leader Theodoric, fifty years later. For Roman bishops from 493 onwards, Arianism was the elephant in the room, never mentioned in correspondence with their new masters. Gelasius did however compose two now-lost books against Arius, according to *LP*.⁷⁴ Amory argues that Theodosius' status as an Arian was not so worrying to Gelasius as the monophysitism espoused in the *Henotikon*, and that it was partly Theodosius' reluctance to force Gelasius to adhere to Anastasius I's position in the Acacian schism that made him tolerable to Gelasius and later Symmachus and Hormisdas.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ E.g. Leo I's letters to Italian bishops on Pelagianism, to be discussed in the next section.

⁷¹ E.g. *Serm.* 84; ed. Chavasse, CCSL 138A, pp. 525–526, on the anniversary of the invasion of Rome by Alaric in 410 or Geiseric in 455. Leo attributes the salvation of the city to the triumph of saints over demons, omitting to mention that Alaric/Geiseric was a Christian of sorts. See the discussion in Neil, *Leo the Great*, pp. 8–11 and 118–119.

⁷² Leo I, *Ep.* 15.2 to Turibius, bishop of Astorga; trans. Neil, *Leo the Great*, p. 85: "In this they favour also the error of the Arians, who say that the Father is prior to the Son, because he was once without the Son and then he began to be the Father when he begot the Son."

⁷³ Felix III, *Ep.* 3 to Peter Fuller, bishop of Antioch, from the Roman Synod (note that in n. 2 in *PL* 58, col. 903D this letter and the one following are attributed to Felix' predecessor Simplicius).

⁷⁴ *LP* 1, p. 255.

⁷⁵ On Gelasius' response to Theodoric's activity as an Arian general from 489–498 see P. Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 196–203; on Symmachus, pp. 203–206; on Hormisdas' response, pp. 206–216.

Symmachus of Rome sent a letter of consolation to exiled bishops in Africa, where he informs them that he is sending relics of Sts Nazarius and Romanus as they had requested in letters to his deacon Hormisdas.⁷⁶ He also sent money and clothing to exiled bishops in the Arian sees of Africa and Sardinia.⁷⁷ The Byzantine victories in North Africa, and over the Ostrogothic rule of Italy, in Justinian's wars of the mid-sixth century brought Arian influence over Rome under control for a short time. It is in this context that Agapitus wrote his letters to the bishops of North Africa, mentioned above. However, the Lombard invasions from 568 onwards brought a renewed Arian presence into northern and central Italy. The contest between Arians and catholics for control of individual sees in Lombard Italy continued well past the pontificate of Gregory the Great. In Spoleto, for example, the Arian Lombard bishop, who had been unable to obtain a church from the local catholics, tried to seize the church of St Paul but was miraculously blinded.⁷⁸

In Gaul, many Gallo-Roman bishops remained opposed to the Arianism of their new overlords, the Visigothic kings. Around 458 Faustus of Riez was elevated as bishop of Rhegium (Provence) but was later banned by Eurich (477–485). The see of Limoges, which had long been vacant under the rule of the Arian king, welcomed back a catholic bishop, Ruricius, only after Eurich's death. Avitus (c. 490–518) was raised to the episcopate in Vienne c. 490 in Burgundy, then still predominantly Arian. His attempts to convert Gundobad to the catholic faith failed but he was able to influence Sigismund, Gundobad's successor, to embrace orthodoxy. Avitus' annual conversations with the Arians and other interactions are recorded in four letters.⁷⁹ The Arian hold was strengthened with the arrival of Franks, until the baptism of the Merovingian king Clovis (481–511) into the orthodox Christianity of his wife Clothilde. In a letter to Clovis, Anastasius II, bishop of Rome, congratulates the king on his conversion to Christianity (perhaps from Arianism, which is not mentioned), flattering him by appealing to his spiritual role as protector of the church.⁸⁰ We may compare this with Avitus of Vienne's letter to Clovis, on the occasion of his baptism, in which the bishop makes

⁷⁶ *Ep.* 11; ed. Thiel, pp. 708–709 (507–512 CE).

⁷⁷ *LP* 1, p. 263.

⁷⁸ *Dial.* 3.29. 2–4; eds., trans. A. de Vogüé, P. Antin, *Dialogorum libri IV de miraculis patrum italicorum*, SC 260 (Paris, 1979), pp. 376–378. This episode is discussed by C. Ricci, "Gregory's Missions to the Barbarians", in eds. Neil, Dal Santo, *A Companion to Gregory the Great*, forthcoming. Ricci also covers the missions to the Franks and Visigoths.

⁷⁹ *Epp.* 23, 31, 77, 86; cf. *Epp.* 7, 28.

⁸⁰ Anastasius II, *Ep.* 2; ed. Thiel, p. 624.

it clear that Clovis has chosen the better part in adopting catholicism.⁸¹ Clovis was successful in driving the Visigoths out of southern Gaul into Spain, which remained an Arian stronghold until the conversion of King Reccared (586–601) in 589.⁸² In the same year, the Council of Toledo sanctioned the official acceptance of catholicism by the Visigoths. Reccared's father Leovigild (568–586) was a strong supporter of Arianism, and Reccared's brother had become a martyr for the orthodox cause.

Pelagianism in North Africa, Italy and Gaul

In the early fifth century the monk Pelagius' doctrine of the possibility of human perfection found an enthusiastic body of supporters amongst the Roman aristocracy. With his denial of original sin and strong emphasis on the freedom of human will and the ascetic way of life, including the total renunciation of private property,⁸³ Pelagius was especially appealing in the context of the Roman sieges from 408 to 410, when many were forced to give up their properties in Rome and flee for safety to North Africa, thus making a virtue of necessity. Melania the Younger and her husband Pinianus were but two of the most famous members of the Roman aristocracy who found the Pelagian emphasis on human co-operation with divine grace appealing, causing Augustine to send impassioned pleas to the couple by letter to maintain their social responsibilities as evergetists to the church. To some, especially Augustine, the Pelagian doctrines of justification by faith and the human capacity to achieve perfection through acts of virtue appeared to

⁸¹ Avitus, *Ep.* 46; ed. Peiper, MGH AA 6/2, p. 75. Shanzer and Wood, *Avitus of Vienne*, p. 364, comment: "At the very least we can conclude from the opening of the letter that Clovis had been influenced by Arianism". Possibly he was an Arian catechumen, as argued by D. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism of Clovis: The Bishop of Vienne vs the Bishop of Tours", *Early Medieval Europe* 7/1 (1998), pp. 29–57. Clovis' conversion is traditionally dated to his victory over the Alemanni at the battle of Tolbiac (Vogliacum) in 496, on the basis of Gregory of Tours' account in *Historia francorum* 2.30; eds. B. Krusch, W. Levison, MGH SS rerum Merovingicarum 1/1 (Hannover, 1937), pp. 75–76. Shanzer, "Dating the Baptism", p. 44, argues from Avitus' *Ep.* 46 that a more probable dating of his baptism is the immediate aftermath of the Franco-Visigothic war of 507, perhaps in 508.

⁸² Gregory the Great, *Reg.* 1.41 to Leander of Seville; ed. Norberg, CCSL 140, p. 48; *Ep.* 9.229 to Reccared; ed. Norberg, CCSL 140A, pp. 805–809.

⁸³ As set out in the anonymous Pelagian tract *De divitiis*; PL Supplementum 1, 1380–1418; trans. B.R. Rees, *Pelagius: Life and Letters* (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 174–211. Once attributed to Pelagius, or a British follower of Pelagius who had emigrated to Sicily, *De divitiis* is now thought to have been written by a native of Italy or Gaul: Rees, *Pelagius*, pp. 16–17, 171–172. The manuscript ascription to *Sixtus episcopus et martyr* probably refers to Sixtus III, a former Pelagian but later bishop of Rome, and may even be accurate.

undermine the doctrine of salvation by divine grace. The anonymous author of a tract-length letter to the consecrated virgin Demetrias addressed head-on the threat Pelagianism posed to the social fabric of the Roman senatorial class. *De vera humilitate* was composed in the 430s to convince the wealthy young woman not to abandon her support for the institutionalised church but to use her inherited wealth for its benefit.⁸⁴ The rival correspondence of Augustine and Pelagius with Demetrias, her mother Juliana Aniciana and her grandmother Proba, shows that the proper spiritual disposition towards wealth was causing something of a crisis for the Roman Christian aristocracy.⁸⁵

Augustine wrote another three letters on the Pelagian crisis to fellow bishops (*Ep.* 186 to Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* 187 to Dardanus and *Ep.* 194 to Sixtus III of Rome), urging them to make pastoral care their primary concern, not the pursuit of speculative theology.⁸⁶ Further letters of Augustine on Pelagianism are treated above in Chapter 2.⁸⁷

First condemned by the synod of Carthage (404), Pelagius was condemned again at Milevis (416), and the findings of these two African councils were endorsed in letters of Pope Innocent I. Pelagius then appealed to Innocent for protection and approval of his teachings. Upon the death of Innocent, the Greek pope Zosimus (417–418) took up the joint cause of Pelagius and his associate Caelestius, and pronounced both men innocent of deviation from the catholic faith. The outraged African bishops led by Augustine held another synod at Carthage in 418 and reinforced their condemnation of both men and their teachings. Zosimus changed his tune, endorsed the Synod of Carthage and declared Pelagian doctrines heretical in his encyclical *Tractoria*.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Ed., trans. M.K.C. Krabbe, *Epistula ad Demetriadem de vera humilitate. A Critical Text and Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (Washington, DC, 1965). See also A. Kurdock, "Demetrias ancilla dei: Anicia Demetrias and the Problem of the Missing Patron", in eds. K. Cooper, J. Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage*, pp. 190–224; B. Neil, "On True Humility: an Anonymous Letter on Poverty and the Female Ascetic", in eds. W. Mayer, P. Allen, L. Cross, *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church 4: The Spiritual Life* (Strathfield, 2006), pp. 233–246.

⁸⁵ Pelagius, *Ep. ad Demetriadem*; PL 30, 15–45; trans. Rees, *Pelagius*, pp. 35–70; Augustine to Juliana, *Ep.* 188; NBA 23, pp. 176–192; Augustine to Proba and Juliana on the occasion of Demetrias' consecration, *Ep.* 150; NBA 22, pp. 496–498. See Rees, *Pelagius*, pp. 29–35; P.R.L. Brown, "Augustine and a Crisis of Wealth in Late Antiquity", *The Saint Augustine Lecture 2004, Augustinian Studies* 36 (2005), pp. 5–30.

⁸⁶ See P. Descotes, "Saint Augustin et la crise pélagienne", *Révue d'études augustiniennes et patristiques* 56 (2010), pp. 197–227.

⁸⁷ Augustine, *Epp.* 140 and 157. See Chapter 2, 'Hybrid Forms'.

⁸⁸ Three fragments are edited in PL 20, 693–695. See O. Wermelinger, *Rom und Pelagius*:

The African bishops' decision was confirmed by an imperial rescript of Honorius in 418, which expelled Pelagians from Italy.⁸⁹ The Pelagian cause had been taken up in southern Italy by Julian, bishop of Eclanum (416/417–418),⁹⁰ who rejected the *Tractoria* and attacked the anti-Pelagian camp, led by Augustine, as enemies of marriage and holders of crypto-Manichean views. Before the Council of Ephesus, Pelagianism had found some adherents in the East, under the protection of Nestorius. A year after Nestorius' ordination as patriarch and just as the storm of accusations of heresy was about to break, Caelestius, Julian and several other Pelagian bishops sought refuge in the imperial court in Constantinople. How far Nestorius was influenced by their views is indeterminable—Nestorius certainly never mentioned Pelagius by name—but he may well have regarded his enemies' enemies as his friends. He certainly seemed well-disposed towards Caelestius, writing him a letter of consolation upon his forced departure from Constantinople in 430 when Theodosius expelled all Pelagian clergy from the East.⁹¹ A Latin translation of Nestorius' letter to Caelestius formed part of a dossier of anti-Pelagian texts made by Marius Mercator, the fifth-century disciple and correspondent of Augustine. For Mercator, a staunch opponent of Pelagius, it was a case of his enemy's friends (the Nestorians) becoming his enemies. It was Nestorius' support for Pelagius rather than his doctrinal aberrations that earned him the opprobrium of Pope Celestine I.⁹² Nestorius and Caelestius were condemned together in the *acta* of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431), though neither is mentioned by name. As Bark eloquently put it, at this council, "Celestine sacrificed Nestorius to Cyril and Cyril agreed to the condemnation of the Pelagians, in whose teachings he had previously shown no interest at all."⁹³

die theologische Position der römischen Bischöfe im pelagianischen Streit in den Jahren 411–432, Päpste und Papsttum 7 (Stuttgart, 1975); idem, "Das Pelagiusdossier in der *Tractoria* des Zosimus", *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 26 (1979), pp. 336–368; C. Ocker, "Augustine, Episcopal Interests, and the Papacy in Late Roman Africa", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42/2 (1991), pp. 179–201, and literature cited therein.

⁸⁹ See M. Lamberigts, "Cooperation of Church and State in the Condemnation of Pelagianism", in eds. T.L. Hettema, A. van der Kooij, *Religious Polemics in Context* (Assen, 2004), pp. 363–375.

⁹⁰ See M. Lamberigts, "Augustine and Julian of Aeclanum on Zosimus", *Augustiniana* 42 (1992), pp. 311–330, and idem, "Iulianus IV (Iulianus von Aeclanum)", *RAC* 19 [149/150] (1999), pp. 483–505, with lit..

⁹¹ *Ep.* 35 (*CPG* 5668); *ACO* 1/5, p. 65, 18–33 (in Latin). *Constitutio Sirmondiana* 6; *CTH* 16.2.27, pp. 911–912; trans. Pharr, p. 479.

⁹² W. Bark, "The Doctrinal Interests of Marius Mercator", *Church History* 12/3 (1943), pp. 210–216.

⁹³ Bark, "The Doctrinal Interests", p. 215.

After the Council of Ephesus I, Pelagianism ceased to be a problem in the East. However trouble with Pelagians continued to brew in the West. In Italy, according to the chronicle of Prosper,⁹⁴ Leo was instrumental in Sixtus' opposition to Julian in 439, and in preventing Julian from regaining his former see of Eclanum: this does not survive in the epistolary narrative. However, Leo's first two letters as bishop were devoted to addressing the problem of Pelagian clergy who were returning to northern Italy from exile in the early 440s.⁹⁵ Also around 440, a Pelagian tract was published in Rome by the circle of Julian Eclanum under the title of *Praedestinitus*.⁹⁶

A modified form of Pelagianism whose tenets differed in crucial respects from the teachings of Pelagius on free will and original sin, now known as "semi-Pelagianism", was introduced to Gaul by John Cassian and taken up by the monks of Marseilles.⁹⁷ These monks were grappling with Augustine's somewhat extreme views on predestination and the role of free will in human salvation. Faustus of Riez' preface to *De gratia*, written after the Council of Arles (c. 470), is not a standard dedication letter to its recipient Leontius, but a brief outline of the purpose in writing the *De gratia*, namely, to refute Pelagius' exaggerated teaching on the efficacy of human works.⁹⁸ After the condemnation of the doctrine of predestination at the Council of Arles, further corrections were made at the Council of Lyon (c. 470/471). In spite of episcopal efforts to stamp it out, Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism lived on in Gaul, Britain and Ireland: its final condemnation is recorded at the second Council of Orange in 529.

Priscillianism in Spain

In the 440s, the heretical movement of Priscillianism enjoyed a resurgence in the mountainous Spanish province of Galicia. The sect had gone underground after its founder, Bishop Priscillian of Avila, was executed along with

⁹⁴ *Epitoma chronicon* 1336; ed. Mommsen, MGH AA 9, p. 477.

⁹⁵ Leo Mag., *Ep.* 1, *Ep.* 2, dated 440–442. See B. Neil, "A Crisis of Orthodoxy: Leo I's Fight against the 'Deadly Disease' of Heresy", in eds. Sim, Allen, *Ancient Jewish and Christian Texts*, pp. 144–158.

⁹⁶ Although it contained a nominal condemnation of Pelagius, it was actually a Pelagian or semi-Pelagian defence of free will and a condemnation of Augustine's teachings on grace and predestination, which it presented in a much distorted version.

⁹⁷ See Cassian, *De incarnatione Christi*; ed. M. Petschenig, *Iohannis Cassiani opera*, CSEL 17 (Vienna, 2004), vol. 1.

⁹⁸ Faustus, *Ep.* 1, PL 58, 835C–837B; cf. Krusch, MGH AA 8, p. LVI.

several of his followers for sorcery c. 386 CE.⁹⁹ Priscillian's followers continued to flourish especially in Galicia in the 390s until the condemnation of their practices at the Synod of Toledo in 400.¹⁰⁰ Orosius, bishop of Braga, consulted Augustine on their status in his warning letter, the *Commonitorium*. When the Council of Toledo decided to readmit bishops who had renounced Priscillianism, Innocent I was called upon to uphold the decision.¹⁰¹ In the 440s they appear again in their former stronghold of Galicia, having been allowed to flourish free from imperial persecution due to the Suevi and Vandal domination of the region. The bishop of Astorga sought the aid of the bishop of Rome on what to do in these circumstances, sending him a personal letter together with a tract detailing sixteen points in which the Priscillianists deviated in their teaching.¹⁰² Pope Leo's reply shows how the genealogy of heresy could be applied to disarm a new enemy by framing him as an older, familiar one. This was a common strategy in episcopal dealing with heretics of all kinds.¹⁰³

Donatism in North Africa

The Donatist schism, which began in 303, was still very much alive in North Africa after its condemnation at the Council of Carthage in 411.¹⁰⁴ Augustine of Hippo was at the forefront of the catholic opposition, and conducted

⁹⁹ For older bibliography on Priscillian and Priscillianism, see B. Vollmann, *Studien zum Priscillianismus. Die Forschung, die Quellen, der fünfzehnte Brief Papst Leos des Grossen*, Kirchengeschichtliche Quellen und Studien 7 (St. Ottilien, 1965). More recently: H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: the Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1976); M. Conti, ed., trans., *Priscillian of Avila. The Complete Works*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ Chadwick, *Priscillian*, p. 157.

¹⁰¹ Innocent I, *Ep.* 3; PL 20, 485–493.

¹⁰² *Ep.* 15.2: 'In quo Arrianorum quoque suffragantur errori dicentium quod Pater Filio prior sit ...'; eds., trans. Schipper, van Oort, *Sermons and Letters*, p. 56: "In this they (sc. the Priscillianists) favour the error of the Arians, who say that the Father is prior to the Son ...". In the same letter Leo likens their beliefs to the heresies of Sabellius, Paul of Samosata, Photinus, Cerdo and Marcion.

¹⁰³ The followers of Dioscorus and Eutyches were also accused of holding to the "mad notion" of the Manichees, in Leo I's letter to Julian of C  os, *Ep.* 109, of 25 November 452.

¹⁰⁴ The classic study remains that of W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church. A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford, 1952; repr. 1971), esp. pp. 275–336, which was supported by archaeological evidence gathered during the author's service during World War II. H. Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: from Galilee to Gregory the Great*, Oxford History of the Christian Church (Oxford, 2001), pp. 382–393, gives a basic summary of the sources. See the forthcoming volume; ed. M.A. Gaumer, A. Dupont, M. Lamberigts, *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity*, LAHR (Leuven, forthcoming).

a lively correspondence with various protagonists, including the Donatist bishop Gaudentius.¹⁰⁵

In various letters Augustine refers to the cruelty and violence of the Donatists and Circumcellions,¹⁰⁶ accusing them too of pillaging.¹⁰⁷ He alleges that the robberies they have committed in the region of Hippo “make the actions of the barbarians perhaps seem less severe”.¹⁰⁸ In *Letter* 185, which Augustine regarded as a book and entitled *The Correction of the Donatists*, he deals with the attempted murder of Maximian, the catholic bishop of Bagai in southern Numidia, in c. 403, who was attacked at the altar by the Donatists. The bishop was beaten with clubs and other weapons, and with pieces of wood torn from the altar, before being stabbed in the groin with a dagger. After being dragged around he was abandoned by his assailants, but when the catholics rallied to carry him off while singing Psalms, the Donatists “became enraged with fiercer anger and snatched him from the hand of those who were carrying him, badly mistreating and putting to flight the catholics, whom they surpassed by their great numbers and easily terrified by their savagery”.¹⁰⁹ Next the Donatists took Maximian up to a tower and pushed him off, but he managed to survive and was nursed back to health by his supporters.¹¹⁰ Conflict between Donatists and catholics was long-standing and violent in the area of Bagai, where in the mid-340s a massacre had been perpetrated by the Circumcellions.¹¹¹

The catholic position was supported by imperial force under the exarch Marcellinus, who presided over the conference of Carthage in 412 and subsequently prosecuted the Donatists under imperial anti-heresy laws, seizing

¹⁰⁵ Augustine wrote two tracts entitled *Contra Gaudentium*. These were perhaps self-consciously modelled on republican Roman law-court speeches, such as Cicero's *Contra Lucium Catilinam*, *Contra Rullum* and *In Verrem*. The continuity of themes in Augustine's anti-Pelagian letters and tracts, and his writings on Donatism has recently been revealed by A. Dupont, “Augustine's Recourse to 1 Jn 1,8 Revisited. The Polemical Roots of an Anti-Pelagian Stronghold”, *Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa* 46 (2011), pp. 71–90.

¹⁰⁶ On the violent persecution of rigorist Donatists and their militant arm, the Circumcellions, see now B.D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence. African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, 2011), esp. pp. 828–839. Cf. M. Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ. Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire*, Transformation of the Classical Heritage 39 (Berkeley, 2005), pp. 103–130 on religious violence in Donatist North Africa.

¹⁰⁷ See e.g. *Epp.* 108.14, 111.1, 139.2, 185.27, 11*.26.

¹⁰⁸ *Ep.* 111.1; NBA 21/2, p. 1094. Trans. R. Teske, *Letters 100–155 (Epistulae)*, WSA 2 (Hyde Park, NY, 2003), p. 88.

¹⁰⁹ *Ep.* 185.27; NBA 23, pp. 48, 50. Trans. Teske, *Letters 156–210 (Epistulae)*, WSA 3 (Hyde Park, NY, 2004), p. 195.

¹¹⁰ On the entire episode see Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, pp. 442–443, pp. 527–529.

¹¹¹ See further Shaw, *Sacred Violence*, pp. 165–167.

their estates.¹¹² North Africans in the provinces of Numidia and Mauritania especially continued to defect to the schism, which had its own churches and clergy. M. Tilley points out that Augustine's letters show more clearly than his tractates that Donatists had their own evolving theology, especially in the areas of ecclesiology and sacraments, with schisms occurring within Donatism, such as the Maximianists and Rogatists.¹¹³ We also now have three reliably Donatist letters, which survived by being buried among the *Spuria* of Sulpicius Severus.¹¹⁴

The Donatist problem was not confined to North Africa. After the Vandal invasions of the 430s and their settlement in the northern province of Proconsular Africa, persecutions of all non-homoean Christians drove Donatists, Manicheans and catholics alike into exile.¹¹⁵ Possidius relates that Augustine saw all but three catholic churches destroyed by Vandal soldiers: only those of Hippo, Carthage and Cirta survived, and even the city of Hippo was destroyed and abandoned after Augustine's death in 430.¹¹⁶ Donatist refugees from the province of Mauretania settled in southern Gaul, to the consternation of catholic bishops there, as we learn from the correspondence of Pope Leo I.¹¹⁷ After the Byzantine reconquest of North Africa, and Justinian's issue of an edict proscribing Donatists, Arians and Jews in 535,¹¹⁸ there seems to have been a lull in the persecution of Donatists for about 55 years. The last definite mention of Donatists in any episcopal letter is found in the *Registrum* of Gregory the Great (590–604), who was concerned by the continuing vigour of Donatism in Africa, especially in southern Numidia.¹¹⁹

¹¹² See Augustine, *Ep.* 185.9.36–37; NBA 26, pp. 56, 58.

¹¹³ M. Tilley, "Redefining Donatism: Moving Forward", *Augustinian Studies* 42 (2011), pp. 21–32, esp. pp. 27–28. Tilley calls for further attention to be focussed on the letters of Augustine for a better understanding of Donatism (*ibid.*, p. 26).

¹¹⁴ (CPL 479 iv.v.vi); ed. C. Lepelley, "Trois documents méconnus sur l'histoire sociale et religieuse de l'Afrique romaine tardive, retrouvés parmi les *Spuria* de Sulpice Sévère", *Antiquités africaines* 25 (1989), pp. 235–262.

¹¹⁵ While the Nicene sources dismissed the Vandal leader Geiseric as an Arian, he was in fact a homoean, that is, an opponent of the homousian doctrine that had been proclaimed orthodox at the Council of Nicaea (325 CE). See Heather, "Christianity and the Vandals", pp. 137–138.

¹¹⁶ Augustine, *Ep.* 220.7; NBA 23, pp. 626, 628; Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, 28.10; ed. Bastiaansen, pp. 127–241 at p. 208; Frend, *Donatist Church*, pp. 301–302.

¹¹⁷ Leo Mag., *Ep.* 168.18; PL 54, 1209; Frend, *Donatist Church*, p. 305.

¹¹⁸ Justinian, *Novella* 37.5 and 37.8, issued on 1 August 535; eds. R. Schoell et al., *Corpus iuris civilis*, vol. 3, *Novellae*, 13th ed. (Berlin, 1963), p. 245.

¹¹⁹ Greg. Mag., *Reg.* 1.72, 2.33, 2.46, 3.32; ed. Norberg, CCSL 140, pp. 80–81, 119, 138 and 178.

REVIEW OF SIXTH-CENTURY CHRISTOLOGICAL DISPUTES

By contrast with the previous century, sixth-century episcopal correspondence relating to crisis and religious conflict is sparse at best. Even the contents of the papal *scrinium* are patchy, there being little or nothing from Popes John I (523–526), Felix IV (526–530), Boniface II (530–532), John II (532–535) and John III (561–574). In the East, with regard to epistolary *corpora* we rely for the most part on the collection of letters of Severus of Antioch—which, however, reflects the bias of its compiler in favour of canonical and disciplinary matters—and on a dossier of letters apparently put together soon after 580 and discussed in our case-study below, which reveals the serious internal conflicts in the anti-Chalcedonian party from the 550s to the last decades of the century. As we pointed out in Chapter 4 on natural disasters, it is a matter of regret that we have no surviving correspondence from the Antiochene Patriarch Ephrem to illuminate sixth-century religious conflict. There are also no letters surviving from the influential and prolific Eulogius, patriarch of Alexandria (580–607), who was active during four imperial reigns. Nevertheless, religious conflict in this period was rife and is well documented from other sources, mainly historical works, although these too become increasingly sketchy as the sixth century progresses. Here we rely principally on Marcellinus *Comes*, John Malalas, the church historians Zachariah, Evagrius, and John of Ephesus, Syriac chronicles and the later chroniclers, Theophanes (eighth to ninth centuries) and Michael the Syrian (twelfth century), who preserve some excellent earlier sources.

Religious conflict in the sixth century continued to focus on the reception or rejection of the Council of Chalcedon, played out in starker and more polarized form than previously. The eirenic emperor Anastasius I (491–518) abided by Zeno's *Henotikon*, with confusing results. The church historian Evagrius reports that each bishop was allowed to maintain the christological *status quo* in his see. The situation became even more absurd, he relates, because “the prelates of the East were not even in communion with each other, nor indeed were those directing the sees of Europe with Libya, and much less so with outsiders”.¹²⁰ Amid such disunity in the East, it was not surprising that the Acacian schism continued.

The reign of Anastasius, who was sympathetic to opponents of the Council of 451, was to witness the crystallization of the anti-Chalcedonian posi-

¹²⁰ Evagrius, *HE* 3.30; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, p. 126, 27–30; trans. Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 167.

tion and a powerful articulation of its theology. Instrumental in this were Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbog, who arrived in Constantinople around 500, but had left before the monk Severus, later patriarch of Antioch, arrived there in 508. The partnership of these two men, who would not be satisfied with anything less than an outright condemnation of the Council of Chalcedon, has been described as a turning-point in the history of incarnational theology because they galvanized the politics and theological vocabulary of the anti-Chalcedonian movement.¹²¹ Paradoxically at the same time the ecclesiastical policies of Emperor Anastasius were waning as the *Henotikon* was proved an ineffective instrument of union: the patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch and Jerusalem were held by staunch Chalcedonians. This did not deter Philoxenus, however, from engineering the removal of Flavian, patriarch of Antioch, and the substitution of Severus in 512 with the agreement of the emperor.

The concerted attempt of Philoxenus and Severus to overturn Chalcedon led the adherents of the Council of 451 to seek some rapprochement by reconciling the formulae “in two natures” and “from two natures” and to demonstrate that Cyril of Alexandria, the touchstone of orthodoxy for the anti-Chalcedonians, was in accord with Chalcedon. This movement, called neo-Chalcedonianism, gathered momentum and could have provided common ground in the conflict about the contentious council.¹²² On the other hand, outright support for Chalcedon was growing in Illyria, as we learn from a letter of the bishops there to Pope Symmachus (512),¹²³ and from the demands of the Gothic general, Vitalian, who was quartered in Thrace with troops faithful to the papal cause. Following Vitalian’s revolt and his defeat of Anastasius’ troops on the Black Sea in 514, a number of anti-Nestorian monks from Scythia arrived in Constantinople, championing the phrase “one of the Trinity suffered in the flesh” in the liturgical hymn known as the Trisagion. This catch-cry was to characterize orthodoxy in the capital and it was subsequently embraced by Emperor Justinian.¹²⁴

¹²¹ See C. Moeller, “Le Chalcédonisme et le néo-Chalcédonisme en Orient de 451 à la fin du VI^e siècle”, in eds. Grillmeier, Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon*, vol. 1, pp. 637–720 at 670. On Philoxenus see A. de Halleux, *Philoxène de Mabbog. Sa vie, ses écrits, sa théologie* (Louvain, 1963). On Severus see Case-study 5 in Chapter 3.

¹²² Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 22–23; cf. Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, pp. 10–11.

¹²³ *Ep.* 12; ed. Thiel, pp. 709–717.

¹²⁴ For details see J.A. McGuckin, “The ‘Theopaschite Confession’ (Text and Historical Context): A Study in the Cyrilline Re-interpretation of Chalcedon”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984), pp. 239–255; Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 317–343.

Although in 518 the largely pro-Chalcedonian party in Constantinople welcomed Anastasius' successor, Justin I, as orthodox, it has recently been suggested that the new emperor had political reasons for accepting Chalcedon, rescinding the *Henotikon*, and implementing the *libellus* of Pope Hormisdas (514–523),¹²⁵ which had already been sent to Emperor Anastasius in 515. We are quite well informed by Hormisdas' letters about the missions of his legates to Constantinople from 515 to 517.¹²⁶ The *libellus*, a letter-tractate also called the Formula of Hormisdas, insisted on observance of the formula of Chalcedon, that those regarded by the see of Rome as heretics (Nestorius, Dioscorus, Timothy Aelurus, Peter Mongus and Acacius) be struck from the diptychs in the East as well, and that cases against bishops be tried in the papal court.¹²⁷ It also demanded the submission of the secular ruler to the Roman pontiff. Justin and his nephew and successor, Justinian I (527–565), implemented the document as another instrument of union everywhere except Egypt, but while it healed the breach between Rome and Constantinople, it produced lasting divisions in the East between adherents and opponents of the Council of Chalcedon. There followed large-scale banishments of anti-Chalcedonian bishops who refused to subscribe to the document, including that of Severus of Antioch. Many of the exiles, who were subsequently joined by monks and nuns, fled to Egypt. A considerable number of Severus' letters report on this crisis in the life of the anti-Chalcedonian church,¹²⁸ one of the most serious aspects of which was the resulting lack of clergy. *Letter* 1.7 to Castor, bishop of Perga, reports a petition by sub-deacons alleging that readers and cantors were trying to seize their place by violence.¹²⁹ Severus warned the bishop of Tripolis that it was the duty of "bishops like you" to restrain any incidents of mob violence and to maintain all good order in the cities.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ See Menze, *Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, pp. 18–30.

¹²⁶ *Epp.* 4, 6, 8, 13, 27, 37; ed. Thiel, pp. 745–746, 747–748, 755–758, 766–768, 796–800, 812–813. On these and other papal embassies at the time see A. Gillett, *Envoys and Political Communication in the Late Antique West, 411–533* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 11–26.

¹²⁷ *Ep.* 8; ed. Thiel, pp. 755–758. See the analysis in P. Charanis, *Church and State in the Later Roman Empire. The Religious Policy of Anastasius I (491–518)*, Βυζαντινά Κείμενα και Μελέται 11, 2nd ed. (Thessalonica, 1974), pp. 90–91. On the reception and influence of the document see Menze, *Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, esp. pp. 17–18, and pp. 32–34 with lit.

¹²⁸ See also Case-study 5 on his exile in Chapter 3 above.

¹²⁹ Severus, *Ep.* 1.7; ed., trans. Brooks, *Select Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 43–45 (text), vol. 2, pp. 39–41 (trans.).

¹³⁰ *Ep.* 1.9; ed., trans. Brooks, *Select Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 48–51 (text), vol. 2, pp. 44–46 (trans.) (513–518 CE).

Internal conflicts also beset the anti-Chalcedonians. The correspondence between Bishop Julian of Halicarnassus and Severus, begun before their exile in Egypt, informs us about the extent to which Julian's doctrine alarmed and irritated Severus, although the fundamental point of contention between the two men was a terminological one.¹³¹ Despite Severus' misrepresentations of Julian's doctrine of the *aphtharsia* or incorruptibility of Christ and of the union of human and divine in Christ so complete that the difference between the two faded into the background, it seems that the former bishop of Halicarnassus did not intend to abolish the reality of the body of Christ, but rather to portray Christ as a new Adam, with special prerogatives. This new Adam was not subjected to the limitations of humankind, but voluntarily underwent "passions" such as suffering and death. Since Julian's followers were subsequently not so careful in their formulations, Severus' alarm at the rise and popularity of so-called aphthartodocetism was proven to be well founded. Julianism acquired a firm footing in Egypt, especially in monastic circles, and spread widely, notably to Armenia, causing a serious schism among anti-Chalcedonians. It also spread to Chalcedonian circles, where its most significant adherent may have been Emperor Justinian, who reportedly turned to the doctrine towards the end of his life.¹³² The correspondence between Severus and the exaggerated monophysite, Sergius, which, although couched in letter-form, is really more like a collection of doctrinal treatises,¹³³ provides further evidence of the range of christological opinions among the anti-Chalcedonian party.

A further attempt to strike the right christological balance was made after 536 by the Alexandrian deacon, Themistius, an anti-Chalcedonian opposed to the doctrine of the Julianists, who tried to do justice to the humanity of Christ by positing in him ignorance of certain events. His followers as a consequence were dubbed the Agnoetai (those who do not know).¹³⁴ Originally confined to Alexandria and Constantinople, Themistius' doctrine spread and was attacked by anti-Chalcedonians in treatises and other works. It is mentioned in several episcopal letters, including four in the dossier that

¹³¹ On the controversy surrounding Julian see R. Dragnet, *Julien d'Halicarnasse et sa controverse avec Sévère d'Antioche sur l'incorruptibilité du corps du Christ* (Louvain, 1924); Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 79–111. For the correspondence between Julian and Severus see Hespel, *Sévère d'Antioche. La polémique antijulianiste* 1.

¹³² For an assessment of the sources on this point see Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter Justinians*, pp. 289–291.

¹³³ Ed., trans. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon. The Correspondence of Severus and Sergius*.

¹³⁴ On the Agnoetai see Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 1–102.

forms the basis of our case-study below, and a letter of Gregory or Rome (for there is good reason to believe that Agnoetic doctrine, with its emphasis on Christ's humanity, appealed to some Chalcedonians as well).¹³⁵ Like the conflict engendered by Julianist doctrine, the Agnoetic debate was fierce and long-lived.

The long reign of Justinian was characterised by continual efforts for ecclesiastical unity, partly for political reasons, partly through his interest in theological debate. These efforts were punctuated by persecution of dissidents and forced conversions:¹³⁶ in Antioch Severus' successor, Paul "the Jew" (519–521), persecuted anti-Chalcedonians, as did Patriarch Ephrem of Antioch (527–545), while Bishop John of Ephesus had the mission of converting pagans to Christianity. A further obstacle to the emperor's designs for peace was presented by the increasing fragmentation of the anti-Chalcedonians. In 532 Justinian convened a meeting between six Chalcedonian and six anti-Chalcedonian bishops, to which Severus, as a pivotal figure in any attempt at ecclesiastical unity, was also invited. Severus declined, as attested in a long letter of apology he wrote to Justinian.¹³⁷ The inconclusive meeting is partly documented in detail, the position of the Chalcedonian side being presented in a letter from Bishop Innocentius of Maroneia,¹³⁸ and that of the anti-Chalcedonians by reports from various sources.

Two other major developments during the reign of Justinian are not attested in episcopal letters. One is the creation of anti-Chalcedonian hierarchy begun by John of Tella in Osrhoëne (east Syria) in the early 530s and continued by Jacob Baradaeus until the latter's death in 578.¹³⁹ This development led eventually to the separation of the anti-Chalcedonian churches. In 542/3 the first anti-Chalcedonian bishops were ordained by Patriarch Theodosius: Jacob of Edessa was ordained for Edessa and Theodore of Ara-

¹³⁵ *DM* 13, 14, 44 and 45; *Greg. Mag., Reg.* 10.21.

¹³⁶ There is a huge bibliography on Justinian, his ecclesiastical policies and his theological writings. On the latter see most recently C. dell'Osso, *Cristo e Logos. Il Chalcedonismo del VI secolo in Oriente*, *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum* 118 (Rome, 2010), pp. 257–290 with lit. For recent assessments of the reign of Justinian see Meier, *Das andere Zeitalter*; Maas, ed., *Age of Justinian*; Menze, *Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*; M. Meier, ed., *Justinian: Neue Wege der Forschung* (Darmstadt, 2011), all with lit.

¹³⁷ *Ps. Zach., HE* 9.16; ed. Brooks, *CSCO* 84, pp. 124.15–131.19; trans. in ed. Greatrex, pp. 354–361; cf. Allen, Hayward, *Severus of Antioch*, pp. 153–158.

¹³⁸ See S.P. Brock, "The Conversations with the Syrian Orthodox under Justinian (532)", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 47 (1981), pp. 87–121; further commentary in Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 232–248. The letter of Innocentius (*CPG* 6846), preserved only in Latin translation, is found in *ACO* 4/2, pp. 169–184.

¹³⁹ See Menze, *Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, esp. pp. 145–193.

bia for Bostra. Through the missionary efforts of Jacob in particular the anti-Chalcedonian (Jacobite) church was consolidated from Asia Minor to Nubia.¹⁴⁰ The second is the controversy aroused by anti-Origenist monks in Palestine. Following ideas attributed to the third-century speculative theologian Origen, some monks believed that in the *apokatastasis* or restoration of all things at the end of time, all would be equal to Christ; others, however, who believed in the pre-existence of the soul, maintained that the pre-existent human soul of Christ was the first-born of all creation. Yet another group strongly opposed these so-called Origenists. While conflict regarding the supposed ideas of Origen was not new, Justinian assessed that the situation called for a tract, *Edictum contra Origenem*, anathematizing Origen and Origenists. This was ratified by a synod in 544 and condemned further at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in 553.¹⁴¹ Conversely, the activities of Patriarch Theodosius (d. 566), the successor of Severus as leader of the anti-Chalcedonians, and his opposition to the tritheist doctrine (see below) are well documented in letters in the *DM*, as we shall see in the case-study which follows.¹⁴²

Among the topics raised at the conversations of 532 was the reception of Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia and of some works of Bishops Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Ibas of Edessa, perceived as anti-Cyrrillian by the Council of 451. The contested works of these three authors came to be known as the “Three Chapters”. Since anti-Chalcedonians objected to these persons and their writings on the grounds that they did not reflect the vaunted orthodoxy of Chalcedon, but were rather Nestorian, Justinian tried to achieve compromise about the Three Chapters. However, in 543 or the following year the emperor promulgated an edict condemning them, giving rise to the “Three Chapters Controversy”, yet another source of conflict between adherents and opponents of the council of 451.¹⁴³ Justinian’s condemnation of these

¹⁴⁰ See A. Van Roey, “Les débuts de l’église jacobite”, in eds. A. Grillmeier, H. Bacht, *Das Konzil von Chalkedon. Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3 vols. (Würzburg, 1951) vol. 2, pp. 339–360.

¹⁴¹ For an overview of controversies concerning Origen see R. Williams, “Origenes/Origenismus”, *TRE* 25 (Berlin, New York, 1995), pp. 397–420; for the sixth century see the pioneering work of F. Diekamp, *Die origenistischen Streitigkeiten im sechsten Jahrhundert und das fünfte allgemeine Concil* (Münster, 1899); D. Hombergen, *The Second Origenist Controversy: A New Perspective on Cyril of Scythopolis’ Monastic Biographies as Historical Sources for Sixth-Century Origenism*, *Studia Anselmiana* 132 (Rome, 2001). See also Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 385–410.

¹⁴² See Case-study 2 below.

¹⁴³ See the essays in eds. Chazelle, Cubitt, *Crisis of the Oikoumene*, with lit.; cf. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 411–462.

three pieces was strenuously opposed in the West because it was seen as a betrayal of an ecumenical council, as papal letters, particularly those of the hapless Vigilius (537–555),¹⁴⁴ testify, but the pope was forced to capitulate in person in 548 while being detained in Constantinople. The unease felt about the condemnation of dead theologians is expressed in a letter of Bishop Pontianus of Africa to the emperor Justinian, composed in 545 to 546: Pontianus objects that if Theodore, Theodoret and Ibas “were still living, and, when corrected, would not condemn their own error, they would most justly be condemned. But as things are, to whom will our verdict of condemnation be read? There is nothing in them that could now be set right.”¹⁴⁵ Echoes of the Three Chapters controversy continued to reverberate well into the seventh century.

COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE II (553)

The Fifth Ecumenical Council, held in Constantinople in 553, followed on from the attempt to combat neo-Nestorianism that was manifested in the Three Chapters controversy.¹⁴⁶ It also sought to ratify Justinian's edict of 543 condemning Origenism (which had been rife in monastic communities, especially in Palestine), Evagrius of Pontus and Didymus of Alexandria.¹⁴⁷ Its canons 12–14, incorporating a condemnation of the Three Chapters, were calculated to strengthen the christology of Chalcedon by emphasizing its anti-Nestorian and anti-dualist aspects, but for this very reason the council was seen by some as undoing the work of the Council of 451. Although Pope Vigilius did not confirm the authority of the Council of 553, his successors regarded it as an ecumenical council, and it was accepted by the Chalcedonian churches in the East.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ On Vigilius see C. Sotinel, “Autorité pontificale et pouvoir imperial sous le règne de Justinien: le pape Vigile”, *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome* 104 (1992), pp. 463–493; eadem, s.v. Vigilio, *EDP* 1, pp. 512–528. See also Case-study 3 on Vigilius in Chapter 3 above. On Vigilius' letters see in particular *Scandala* (CPL 1694) in ACO 4/1, pp. 245–247; *Aetius or Constitutum II* (CPL 1696) in ACO 4/2, pp. 138–168. Cf. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 441–442.

¹⁴⁵ *CPL* 864; PL 67, 995–998; trans. in Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, vol. 1, pp. 111–112, here p. 111.

¹⁴⁶ Text in ACO 4/1. For an English translation (with introduction, notes) of the proceedings of this council see Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*. See too Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 439–462.

¹⁴⁷ See further Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 2, pp. 402–410.

¹⁴⁸ See further Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, vol. 1, pp. 99–103.

Through a number of episcopal letters contained in the *DM* we are reasonably well informed about the conflict that arose as a result of the spread of tritheist doctrine from the 550s onwards. The doctrine was refuted in a magisterial *Theological Discourse* composed by Patriarch Theodosius probably soon after 560,¹⁴⁹ which is referred or alluded to repeatedly in episcopal letters. This conflict and its impact on the politics of episcopal ordination will be examined in greater detail in our case-study below. Suffice it to say that, like the conflict engendered by Julianism and Agnoetic doctrine, the tritheist dispute led to wrangling and fragmentation among the anti-Chalcedonians.

Justinian's successor, Justin II (565–578), was initially conciliatory towards the anti-Chalcedonians in his desire to effect ecclesiastical harmony, despite violent outbursts among monastic communities in Syria offering them many concessions, to the extent that high-profile anti-Chalcedonian bishops were beguiled into communion with Chalcedonians. In c. 568 the emperor issued a draft edict, redrafted about three years later, which was moderate and accommodating. When the anti-Chalcedonian party rejected it, persecution began.¹⁵⁰

In the so-called Alexandrine schism of 575, the lead-up to which is discussed in some detail in our second case-study below, episcopal letters played an important part. Indeed, we are reliant on them in the first instance for the events which led to the 40-year schism between the sees of Antioch and Alexandria and involved much of the anti-Chalcedonian party in the East as well.

CONCLUSION

The case-studies below illuminate various strategies that bishops used to contain or inflame religious controversies. It is especially true in the sphere of religious conflict that bishops created as many crises as they resolved. The compilation of dossiers of letters and other pertinent documents was a major means of circulating one's side of a theological argument. Often the compiler took pains to preserve his anonymity, as in the case of the *DM*.

¹⁴⁹ On the calculation of the date see A. Van Roey, "La controverse trithéite jusqu'à l'excommunication de Conon et d'Eugène (557–569)", *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 16 (1985), pp. 141–165; Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, p. 130.

¹⁵⁰ On all these developments see Allen, *Evagrius Scholasticus the Church Historian*, pp. 22–25, 212–214.

Other means were applying false genealogies of heresy, writing circular letters to groups of bishops in other provinces calling for support—often in the guise of encyclicals or festal letters—petitioning members of the imperial family or calling for local or ecumenical councils to resolve controversies. The blustering pomposity of correspondence between bishops engaged in religious disputation and the use of legalistic language both disguise the fact that there was very little civil power attached to either party. Physical punishments were rarely as drastic as the eternal damnation threatened by excommunication or exclusion of one's name from the diptychs. That is not to ignore the fact that Manichees, Donatists, Priscillianists and adherents of other sects could legally be tortured and occasionally put to death. Social exclusion could indeed be tantamount to a death sentence, if it meant being permanently cut off from one's social networks and the means of survival. That is why letters of bishops in exile are so illuminating, because for once we see them writing from a position of relative powerlessness. The use of similes from war and political exile when applied to bishops in self-imposed estrangement from their sees might seem to us misplaced, and treatment of enemies in the faith like enemies of the state may appear, at the least, a little *de trop*. However, this response would miss the real (or perceived) dangers in ecclesiastical disunity during a time of great pressures, both in terms of military security and in the scarcity of resources that war and natural disasters generated. In the next chapter we examine epistolary responses to the social abuses that were an inevitable part of fifth- and sixth-century life, both within the church and without.

CASE-STUDIES OF RELIGIOUS CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Case-Study 1. *After Chalcedon: The Codex Encyclicus*

The controversy and unrest after the Council of Chalcedon in 451 have been outlined above in this chapter. Particularly troubled were Jerusalem, where Patriarch Juvenal had difficulty in retaining his see after his return from the council,¹⁵¹ and Alexandria, where resentment concerning the deposition of Patriarch Dioscorus at Chalcedon festered among parts of the Christian community, to the extent that the anti-Chalcedonian Timothy was smuggled into Alexandria and consecrated patriarch, while the Chalcedonian

¹⁵¹ See L. Perrone, *La Chiesa di Palestina e le controversie cristologiche* (Brescia, 1980), pp. 89–103.

patriarch Proterius was murdered on 28 March 457.¹⁵² In an attempt to put an end to controversy and violence, the emperor Leo decided in 457/8 to circulate to metropolitans, bishops, and select high-profile figures in the monastic movement a questionnaire asking for their reactions to the decisions of the council and the consecration of Timothy Aelurus.¹⁵³ There is some uncertainty among modern scholars whether the emperor did or did not intend to manipulate the outcome.¹⁵⁴ Bishops were to reply individually, or else metropolitans were to convene synods of their suffragans and communicate their decisions by letters which were to be gathered in the imperial chancellery in Constantinople. This process resulted in the preservation in Latin, albeit in an incomplete form, of some 30 episcopal letters and other documents dealing with bishops' responses to the most serious religious crisis in the period with which we are concerned, namely the reception or rejection of the Council of Chalcedon.

The *CEn* survives in two manuscripts deriving from one exemplar dating from the Carolingian age: *Parisinus Latinus* 12098 and *Vindobonensis* 397.¹⁵⁵ A third copy has been lost. The collection in which the *CEn* has been transmitted (*Collectio Sangermanensis* after the library of St Germain des Prés in Paris) includes also the *Breviarium* of the Carthaginian deacon Liberatus relating to the Three Chapters dispute, and a selection of letters and other documents which do not hang together well *qua* content either internally or with the remainder of the *Collectio*.¹⁵⁶ In the *incipit* of *Paris*.

¹⁵² Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, pp. 154–155, 160–162; P. Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople (451–491). De l'histoire à la géo-ecclésiologie*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 327 (Rome, 2006), p. 151 and n. 266 on historical and biblical overtones of this murder.

¹⁵³ The main sources are Zachariah Rhetor, *HE*, Liberatus, *Breviarium*, Evagrius Scholasticus, *HE*, and Michael the Syrian, *Chronicle*. According to Zachariah Rhetor, *HE* 4.5, the idea of consulting by letter came from Anatolius, patriarch of Constantinople, whose see had done well out of the Council of Chalcedon and did not want another council to be summoned to solve the problems that arose after 451. For accounts of the process of collecting the replies to the questionnaire (the *CEn*), see T. Schnitzler, *Im Kampfe um Chalcedon. Geschichte und Inhalt des Codex Encyclius von 458*, Analecta Gregoriana 16 (Rome, 1938); Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, pp. 160–163; Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 195–235. These studies concentrate on the political or theological dimensions of the *CEn*, rather than on the rationale of collecting and deploying episcopal letters in situations of crisis, with which we are principally concerned here.

¹⁵⁴ See, e.g., Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 202–204, who argues against manipulation; *contra* position in Whitby, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 89 n. 112.

¹⁵⁵ The latter suspected by its editor, E. Schwartz, *ACO* 2/5 (Berlin, Leipzig, 1936), pp. 3–98 (editor's *prefatio*, pp. XII–XVI), *praef.* V, to be of slightly later date.

¹⁵⁶ See Schwartz, *ACO* 2/5, *praef.*, p. XX.

Lat. 12098 we read the somewhat ambitious statement: “This manuscript, namely of letters of the entire world, was translated from Greek into Latin by the extremely erudite man, Epiphanius, at the behest of the senator Cassiodorus”.¹⁵⁷ In fact, the number of letters replying to Leo’s questionnaire is moot, and it is clear that what survives to us is incomplete. According to the estimate of Patriarch Ephrem of Antioch (526–544), 470 bishops and monks were involved,¹⁵⁸ whereas some decades later Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria (580–608) gives a number of 1600.¹⁵⁹ At the end of the *CEn* itself we read that the collection auspiciously (‘feliciter’) encompasses 500 letters of bishops of the whole world, the compiler/translator having rounded up the number.¹⁶⁰ In its present form the *CEn* contains only 38 letters (34 letters of reply with another four prefaced to them to contextualize the collection), to which are prefaced ten other documents pertaining to the questionnaire. Two letters of Emperor Marcian and one of Empress Pulcheria stating the position of Chalcedon open the *Collectio Sangermanensis*.¹⁶¹ A list of intended addressees contains 65 names of bishops and monastics, plus the rubric ‘ceteris episcopis metropolitanis’.¹⁶² The order of the list is hierarchical, beginning with the incumbent of the see of Rome, whereas the order of the letters themselves is different; in addition, some names mentioned in the list are not found in the letters, and *vice versa*. Of the 29 missing letters, the absence of two is explained by the fact that the bishops in question signed not individually but with their metropolitans.¹⁶³ We know from the sources that the missing bishops Stephen of Mabbug¹⁶⁴ and Amphilochius

¹⁵⁷ Taken from Cassiodorus, *Institutiones* (CPL 906); PL 70, 1123CD. On the process of translation into Latin and the question whether Epiphanius’s translation was the first see Schnitzler, *Im Kampfe um Chalcedon*, pp. 67–71.

¹⁵⁸ As recorded by Patriarch Photius of Constantinople in the ninth century: Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 229 (254b); ed. R. Henry, *Photius Bibliothèque. Codices 223–229* (Paris, 1965; repr. 2003), vol. 4, p. 142.

¹⁵⁹ Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 230; ed. R. Henry, *Photius Bibliothèque. Codices 230–241* (Paris, 1967; repr. 2003), vol. 5, p. 55, 36 ‘[G]loriosae vero exaggerationis causa’, comments Schwartz, *ACO 2/5, praef.* p. XIII, pointing out that Eulogius was calculating not the responses but the number of episcopal sees in the empire.

¹⁶⁰ *ACO 2/5*, p. 98, 3–4.

¹⁶¹ *Epp.* 1–2; *ACO 2/5*, pp. 3–7; *Ep.* 3; ed. *ACO 2/5*, pp. 7–8.

¹⁶² *ACO 2/5*, pp. 22–24.

¹⁶³ These were Julian of Tabia, who signed *Ep.* 45 with the metropolitan and bishops of Galatia Prima, and Adelphius of Arabissus, who signed *Ep.* 37 with the metropolitan and bishops of Armenia Secunda.

¹⁶⁴ Preserved in Cassiodorus and Benedict of Aniane: see Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, p. 199 with n. 18.

of Side replied,¹⁶⁵ as apparently did Symeon the Stylite,¹⁶⁶ and we may be reasonably confident that Juvenal of Jerusalem responded as well, although his letter does not survive.¹⁶⁷ The metropolitans of Prevalitana (Dacia), of Moesia, and Dacia Ripensis were apparently not consulted: these provinces were probably regarded as disorganized because of barbarian invasions.¹⁶⁸ According to Evagrius,¹⁶⁹ *Letter* 165 of Leo of Rome and a *libellus* composed by Timothy Aelurus formed part of the *CEn*, but today they have not survived in the collection.

The covering document (*Ep.* 10) to the list of addressees informs the reader that with the letter of Emperor Leo announcing the questionnaire another three letters were disseminated: (1) petitions from the Chalcedonian bishops of Egypt and the priests of Alexandria to Emperor Leo (*Ep.* 7); (2) petitions to Emperor Leo from Timothy Aelurus and his party (*Ep.* 9); and (3) a letter from Patriarch Anatolius to the Egyptian church (*Ep.* 8). The language used in these letters, which do not appear in *CEn* in the order given here, together with that of Leo's own encyclical letter sets the tone for many of the bishops' replies. Leo writes of the turmoil in Jerusalem and Alexandria after Chalcedon and describes Emperor Marcian, the convener of the council, as 'sacratissimae memoriae'. He refers to the cruel and violent death of Proterius and to the consecration of Timothy Aelurus, which "appears" to be against the canons. His solution is to seek by letter a quick reassessment of the decisions of 451, rather than have recourse to convening another council, which would be vexatious and require a not inconsiderable amount of work.¹⁷⁰ In *Letter* 7 the situation in Egypt is presented more forcefully from the Chalcedonian side: the bishops speak of Emperor Marcian and Proterius as 'sanctae memoriae', profess their adherence to Nicaea and Chalcedon, express their indignation at the consecration of Timothy, calling it an act of adultery, and describe the murder of Proterius in gruesome detail: although he had sought refuge in the baptistery of the church just before Easter, he was forced out, killed, dragged around

¹⁶⁵ Evagrius, *HE* 2.10; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, p. 61, 27–31. See further below.

¹⁶⁶ See Evagrius, *HE* 2.10; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, pp. 61, 32–62, 3. See further below.

¹⁶⁷ For the arguments see Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 200–201.

¹⁶⁸ As observed by A.-J. Festugière, "Évagre. *Histoire Ecclésiastique*", *Byzantion* 45 (1975), pp. 187–488 at pp. 266–267 n. 80.

¹⁶⁹ *HE* 2.10; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, p. 61, 14–22. See further Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, p. 197 n. 10.

¹⁷⁰ *Ep.* 5; *ACO* 2/5, pp. 9, 35–11, 4. Greek text in Evagrius, *HE* 2.9; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, pp. 59, 18–61, 6.

the city, dismembered, and set on fire—his murderers, we are told, did not even hold back from tasting his entrails like dogs.¹⁷¹ Timothy, the “architect” of this atrocity, was firstly guilty of adultery then of homicide (‘adulter ... homicida’).¹⁷² He acted like a tyrant (‘tyrannico modo’).¹⁷³ This last phrase is taken up by Anatolius in *Letter* 8,¹⁷⁴ who after railing against the unlawful deeds of Timothy, rehearses the gruesome details of Proterius’ murder in very similar terms to those of the Chalcedonian bishops and clergy in *Letter* 7. The murderers, not only acting like dogs in tasting the entrails, outstripped savage animals in their treatment of their bishop, the mediator between God and human beings.¹⁷⁵ *Letter* 9, from Timothy and his party, reaffirms faith in Nicaea and in Ephesus II, but declines to accept Chalcedon.

We come now to survey the surviving replies to Leo’s encyclical letter. *Letter* 14 from the bishops of Europe to the emperor, escalates the rhetoric found in the writings appended to Leo’s letter and disseminated with it. In a pun the bishops describe Leo’s interventions on behalf of Chalcedon and the situation in Alexandria as those of a “lion that comes forth against enemies”,¹⁷⁶ and go on to give an account of Proterius’ murder that is similar to that of Anatolius in *Letter* 8. They take this event a step further, however, enrolling Proterius “in the choir of holy martyrs” and asking for his intercession before God.¹⁷⁷ They condemn Timothy Aelurus as a wolf that, not having spared the shepherd, is not sparing the sheep either.¹⁷⁸ For his part, Bishop Valentius of Philippopolis and his bishops praise Leo as a fierce lion that attacks the enemies of God and of his imperial power, stating that they uphold the Council of Chalcedon and denounce Timothy as a murderer and a parricide.¹⁷⁹ They refer to Emperor Marcian as “the thrice-blessed leader of divine memory”.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷¹ *Ep.* 7; ACO 2/5, p. 14, 6–23.

¹⁷² *Ep.* 7; ACO 2/5, p. 14, 23–24.

¹⁷³ The repetition of these ideas in several replies from the bishops shows that (*pace* Schnitzler, *Im Kampfum Chalcedon*, p. 9) it was not only Emperor Leo’s letter that was known to the recipients of the *CEn*.

¹⁷⁴ ACO 2/5, p. 17, 29–30.

¹⁷⁵ ACO 2/5, p. 19, 25–36.

¹⁷⁶ ‘leo quidem contra hostes existis’; ed. Schwartz, p. 26, 24.

¹⁷⁷ ‘choro sanctorum martyrum’; ed. Schwartz, p. 27, 25–26.

¹⁷⁸ ACO 2/5, p. 28, 3.

¹⁷⁹ *Ep.* 16; ACO 2/5, pp. 28–30. For an assessment of Timothy’s role and stature in the anti-Chalcedonian church see Blaudeau, “Timothée Aelure et la direction ecclésiale”.

¹⁸⁰ ‘divae memoriae ter beato principe Marciano’; ed. Schwartz, p. 29, 39.

These are all recurring themes in the remainder of the replies, together with an emphasis on the conciliar pedigree of Chalcedon, which originates in Nicaea.¹⁸¹ The bishops of Hellespont, for example, declare that they know Chalcedon followed Nicaea, implying that there is no need of another council,¹⁸² while the bishops of Cilicia remark that it would be disgraceful and totally unworthy of the emperor's right faith to announce that it was necessary to call a general synod.¹⁸³ The nefarious character of Timothy Aelurus is developed further, such that the bishops of Phoenicia Libanensis denounce him as an adulterer, not a shepherd but a wolf, not a father but a parricide, not a bridegroom but a violator of the bridal chamber.¹⁸⁴

While generally the episcopal replies in the *CEn* exude a cloying subservience to Emperor Leo,¹⁸⁵ there are some letters that do not completely bear out the confident statement in the covering letter to the list of signatories, to the effect that "all" the replies condemned Timothy Aelurus and approved Chalcedon.¹⁸⁶ Bishop Alypius of Caesarea Cappadocia, for example, observes that he can say little because, not having been present at Chalcedon, he does not know what happened there, and only now has he barely heard of events in Alexandria. Moreover, Alypius has not read the *acta* of Chalcedon, nor was any extensive report brought back from the council by his predecessor Thalassius, but only the definition of faith, which Alypius finds does not depart from the true faith.¹⁸⁷ He concludes that "if what is alleged about Timothy is true", he should be considered unworthy of the episcopate—hardly a resounding "yes" to his condemnation.¹⁸⁸ Other bishops complain similarly that they have not been in possession of the facts: the 21 bishops of Corinth apparently know of events regarding Timothy only from what they have read (presumably in the letters attached to Leo's questionnaire);¹⁸⁹ those of Galatia Prima have only recently got wind of the events in Alexandria.¹⁹⁰ The seven bishops of Epirus Nova for their part hedge their bets on the same events, "for reports should not be accepted from one side",

¹⁸¹ See e.g. *Epp.* 19, 20 (Nicene creed is cited), 22, 23, 25, 26, 31, 33, 35.

¹⁸² *Ep.* 35; ACO 2/5, p. 68, 28–31.

¹⁸³ *Ep.* 29; ACO 2/5, p. 55, 22–26.

¹⁸⁴ *Ep.* 26; ACO 2/5, p. 45, pp. 16–19.

¹⁸⁵ Further developed by Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 1, pp. 204–210, under the heading "The Bishops Happily Accept the Imperial Church".

¹⁸⁶ *Ep.* 10; ACO 2/5, p. 22, 26–30.

¹⁸⁷ *Ep.* 38; ACO 2/5, p. 76, 7–22.

¹⁸⁸ ACO 2/5, p. 77, 6–11.

¹⁸⁹ *Ep.* 43; ACO 2/5, p. 89, 11–12. Again *pace* Schnitzler, *Im Kampfum Chalcedon*, p. 9.

¹⁹⁰ *Ep.* 46; ACO 2/5, p. 91, 32–33.

and remark that if the accusations are indeed true, Timothy is the wrong person ('alienus') for the episcopate that he "is said" to have seized.¹⁹¹ Metropolitan Martyrius of Gortyna on Crete and his seven suffragans assert that if Timothy has been made patriarch according to the rules, he should stay, but if any of the conditions for his consecration have not been fulfilled, his appointment is defective.¹⁹² With regard to the Council of Chalcedon and the possible need to convene another gathering, most of the bishops represented in the *CEn* are content to validate the decisions of 451 in the light of Nicaea, but the bishops of the province of Helenopontus adduce another reason for not reconvening a council: those who desire synods to be convened, they maintain, have only one thing in mind, namely that very many holy bishops should bankrupt their sees by selling their sacred vessels for their expenses and transport. They advise the emperor rather to order the individuals to stay at home in their own churches and pray for the longevity of Leo's reign.¹⁹³

With the *CEn* we are dealing with a much filtered collection of episcopal and other letters concerned with resolving religious conflict. Leaving aside the vagaries of the transmission process, the first of these filters to be considered is the bias of the compiler and/or translator(s), which may account to some extent for the arrangement and incomplete number of the surviving replies to Emperor Leo's encyclical letter in the manuscripts that have come down to us. In at least two cases we can be more or less certain of the reason for omission, namely the letters of Symeon the Stylite and Bishop Amphilochius of Side, both of whose names feature in the list of addressees. Although the passages quoted by Evagrius from Symeon's reply to Emperor Leo show the Stylite accepting Chalcedon, later anti-Chalcedonian sources suggest that his attitude to the council may have been ambiguous, if not negative.¹⁹⁴ According to Zachariah, at Chalcedon itself Amphilochius had been hit over the head to make him sign, and indeed his name is not found in the Greek version of the *acta*.¹⁹⁵ Although Evagrius claims to have read Amphilochius' reply in Zachariah's *Church History*,¹⁹⁶ it does not survive

¹⁹¹ *Ep.* 47; ACO 2/5, p. 95, 34–36.

¹⁹² *Ep.* 48; ACO 2/5, p. 97, 23–30.

¹⁹³ *Ep.* 41; ACO 2/5, p. 85, 29–35. This is not quite what Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, p. 161, understands by the comment.

¹⁹⁴ See the evidence in Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, p. 148 n. 5.

¹⁹⁵ *HE* 3.1, on which see Greatrex et al., *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah*, p. 111 n. 83, p. 108 n. 61.

¹⁹⁶ *HE* 2.10; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, pp. 61, 13–62, 33.

in what has come down to us of that work but rather exists in fragmentary form in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian.¹⁹⁷ According to Evagrius, Amphilochius was alone in condemning the consecration of Timothy while at the same time refusing to accept Chalcedon,¹⁹⁸ a view that would have been incompatible with the agenda of the compiler/translator(s) of the *CEn*.

It was a shrewd attempt on Emperor Leo's part personally to resolve the crisis over Chalcedon and the consecration of Timothy Aelurus, rather than entrusting the task to Leo of Rome or Anatolius of Constantinople, both of whom in one way or another would have met with resentment or opposition. The majority of replies from the bishops to the emperor's encyclical letter may be regarded as a positive endorsement of his imperial rule and overarching authority, rather than as a solution to doctrinal and disciplinary crises over Chalcedon, which indeed continued throughout the rest of the fifth century and beyond. Once again, the responses to the *CEn*, even in the incomplete form in which they survive, underline the pre-eminent role of the episcopal letter in responding to crisis in Late Antiquity.

Case-Study 2. *The Patriarchates of Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria 564–581*

For evidence of episcopal management of religious conflict between anti-Chalcedonian groups in three of the four patriarchates of the East between the years 564 and 581 we have a remarkable dossier of 45 letters, written mostly by bishops, which encompasses at least five letter-types. In the *DM* collection, published by J.-B. Chabot,¹⁹⁹ we find five synodical letters (that is, letters written by new bishops or patriarchs in which they publish their confession of faith to other bishops),²⁰⁰ one widely-disseminated encyclical letter which accompanied a theological discourse,²⁰¹ one canonical letter (so called, obviously, because it had canons appended to it),²⁰² two *entolika* or

¹⁹⁷ *Chron.* 9.5; ed. Chabot, vol. 1, p. 251 (text), vol. 2, pp. 145–148. See further Blaudeau, *Alexandrie et Constantinople*, pp. 158 n. 310, 540 and 564 n. 371; Greatrex et al., *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Zachariah*, pp. 25–26, p. 58.

¹⁹⁸ *HE* 2.10; eds. Bidez, Parmentier, p. 61, 27–31.

¹⁹⁹ See the analysis of the *DM* in Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 265–303.

²⁰⁰ *DM*, nrs. 1, 2, 13, 14 and 44. On this epistolographical genre see P. Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem and Seventh-Century Heresy. The Synodical Letter and Other Documents. Introduction, Texts, Translations, and Commentary*, Oxford Early Christian Texts (Oxford, 2009), pp. 47–51.

²⁰¹ *DM*, nr. 3.

²⁰² *DM*, nr. 6.

mandata of a hortatory nature in letter-form,²⁰³ and four letters designated as *syndoktika* or *edicta*, which encompass agreed statements of a theological or disciplinary nature.²⁰⁴

Apart from a shortage of clergy and bishops in the anti-Chalcedonian churches of Syria and Egypt, three converging crises gave rise to this anonymously compiled dossier. The first was the doctrine of tritheism, which in its sixth-century form²⁰⁵ arose in the 550s among anti-Chalcedonians and was an attempt to solve christological differences by positing that, just as we distinguish three hypostases in the Trinity, so too must we distinguish three natures, substances and godheads.²⁰⁶ The theological niceties of this mostly nominal tritheism do not concern us here, except for the fact that the doctrine caused a bitter split among the anti-Chalcedonians in the three patriarchates with which we are concerned and is the subject of various letters in the *DM*. This doctrinal crisis prompted Bishop Theodosius, agreed leader of the anti-Chalcedonian party after the death of Severus of Antioch in 538, to write his *Theological Discourse* against what he perceived as heresy, a work that is considered the touchstone of orthodoxy in the *DM*. A second point of doctrinal conflict was the popularity of the Agnoetai, who were found initially among anti-Chalcedonians but later also among Chalcedonians. In yet another attempt to achieve christological balance during this time, the Agnoetai upheld the existence of human ignorance in Christ, a position that probably grew out of the argument that patristic *testimonia* regarding Christ's ignorance and knowledge were contradictory.²⁰⁷

²⁰³ *DM*, nrs. 18, 19.

²⁰⁴ *DM*, nrs. 26, 27, 29 and 31.

²⁰⁵ On the various manifestations of tritheism in the early church see B. Studer, art. "Tritheism", in ed. A. Di Berardino, *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, Eng. trans., vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1992), p. 853.

²⁰⁶ On sixth-century tritheism see H. Martin, "La controverse trithéite dans l'empire byzantine au VI^e siècle", diss. Louvain, 1960; A. Van Roey, "La controverse trithéite depuis la condamnation de Conon et Eugène jusqu'à la conversion de l'évêque Elie", in eds. W.C. Delsman et al., *Von Kanaan bis Kerala. Festschrift für Prof. Mag. Dr. Dr. J.P.M. van der Ploeg O.P. zur Vollendung des siebenzigsten Lebensjahres am 4. Juli 1979*. Überreicht von Kollegen, Freunden und Schüler, Alter Orient und Altes Testament. Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients und des Alten Testaments 211 (Neukirchen, Vluyn, 1981), pp. 487–497; idem, "La controverse trithéite jusqu'à l'excommunication de Conon et d'Eugène (557–569)", *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 16 (1985), pp. 141–165; R.Y. Ebied, L.R. Wickham, A. Van Roey, *Peter of Callinicum. Anti-Tritheist Dossier*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 10 (Leuven, 1981); Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 105–263; Grillmeier, with T. Hainthaler, *CCT* 2, part 3, pp. 279–291 (Eng. trans. forthcoming).

²⁰⁷ See further Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 3–15.

The third crisis, which concerned the succession of anti-Chalcedonian patriarchs in Antioch, had been waiting in the wings for some time, but took centre-stage in 564 when Paul, nick-named “the Black”, was ordained to that office. We shall have to look at Paul’s career briefly to understand the depth and breadth of this conflict.²⁰⁸

The anti-Chalcedonian patriarchate of Antioch was vacant after the death of Sergius in c. 560 until in 564, Paul, an Alexandrian archimandrite and *syncellus* (secretary) living in Constantinople, was elevated to the position. This was engineered by his patriarch, Theodosius of Alexandria, but it ran counter to the wishes of the influential leader of the eastern churches, Jacob Baradaeus, who probably wanted the position himself, and additionally went against the will of the Syrian bishops, who had not been consulted and would not have wanted a nominee of the patriarch of Alexandria. Paul thus started his episcopal career in an invidious position from which he was never to recover, attributable in no small measure to the polarization between his followers and those of Jacob.²⁰⁹ The repercussions of Paul’s consecration and the conflict it caused between the sees of Antioch and Alexandria were to continue well into the seventh century.²¹⁰ On Theodosius’ death on 22 June 566, Paul was left as the heir of the deceased’s property, which he used to try to buy his way into the position of patriarch of Alexandria against his rival, the tritheist monk Athanasius, a grandson of the late Empress Theodora. When this attempt was unsuccessful, Paul retired to Syria, then to the Arabian camp of his protector, the anti-Chalcedonian Arab sheik al-Harith. In 570 we find him debating against tritheists in Constantinople, where in the next year he subsequently accepted the edict of

²⁰⁸ On Paul see T. Hermann, “Patriarch Paul von Antiochia und das Alexandrinische Schisma von Jahre 575”, *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 27 (1928), pp. 263–304, corrected by E.W. Brooks, “The Patriarch Paul of Antioch and the Alexandrine Schism of 575”, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 30 (1930), pp. 468–476; Honigmann, *Évêques et évêchés*, pp. 195–205; Frend, *Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, pp. 291–293 and 318–328. The main sources for Paul’s biography, apart from the evidence in the *DM*, are the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus and the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian (which for the most part follows John). See the helpful chronological table by A. Fortescue in Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d’Alexandrie*, pp. 352–353.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Grillmeier, *CCT* 2, part 3, p. 199: “Damit beginnt eine leidvolle Geschichte”.

²¹⁰ The anti-Chalcedonian bishop, John of Ephesus, and eye-witness of many of the events, emphasizes the violence and confusion that occurred, not only in Egypt and Syria but throughout the eastern empire: *HE* 4.10, 12, 16, 19, 20; ed., trans. E.W. Brooks, *Iohannis Ephesini Historiae Ecclesiasticae Pars Tertia*, CSCO 105 (text), Scr. Syr. 54 (Louvain, Paris, 1935), pp. 191, 194–197, 201–202, 205–206, 207; CSCO 106 (trans.), Scr. Syr. 55 (Louvain, 1936; repr. 1964), pp. 154, 143, 147, 151, 155.

union designed by Emperor Justin II and communicated with Chalcedonians. With other bishops Paul withdrew from communion and was incarcerated as a result, upon which the group communicated again. Since by now Paul was regarded as a security risk by the imperial government, he was kept in prison and the eastern synod broke off relations with him, although in 574 he was able to escape to the camp of al-Moundhir, the successor of al-Harith, from where he went to Egypt disguised as a soldier. In 575²¹¹ the candidature of the moderate Theodore, a Syrian archimandrite resident in Egypt, was proposed for the patriarchate of Alexandria, a man who would have supported Paul at a time when his stocks were very low. One of the consecrating bishops was Bishop Longinus of Nubia, a former *apocrisarius* of Paul. The manipulation of this election of an outsider enraged the Alexandrians, who refused to recognise Theodore and proceeded to incite violence and tumult.²¹² They put forward their own candidate, Peter, who lost no time in claiming his rights as ecumenical patriarch and deposing Paul uncanonically, initiating what we now call the Alexandrine schism of 575. Jacob Baradaeus travelled to Egypt to assess the situation, but ultimately decided in favour of Peter and against the absent Paul. Forced to retire to Constantinople, like many out-of-favour anti-Chalcedonians, Paul lived in hiding until his death in 581. He was buried in a convent under cover of darkness with a false name and no funeral.

The compiler/compiler(s) of the *DM* was/were quite obviously supporters of Paul and defenders of his divisive career, but beyond that it is difficult to be more precise. The first part of the dossier (*Epp.* 1–2) contains the synodical letter which Theodosius sent to the exiled Severus of Antioch in 535, and Severus' reply.²¹³ These are included to highlight Theodosius' authority over the Chalcedonian church given Severus' continuing exile (518–538), as well as the latter's approval of Theodosius' consecration as patriarch. The seal of approval which the great Severus gave to Theodosius is, moreover, a guarantee of the validity of Theodosius' future actions, two of the most important of which, from the perspective of the compiler(s) of the *DM*, were his condemnation of tritheism and his appointment of Paul as patriarch. The second part (*Epp.* 3–7)²¹⁴ deals with the tritheist dispute, in which the *Theological Discourse*, designed to manage and indeed end the crisis, assumes an

²¹¹ On the following events see Brooks, "The Patriarch Paul of Antioch", pp. 473–474.

²¹² *HE* 4.10, 11; ed. Brooks, pp. 191–194, 143–145.

²¹³ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 271–272.

²¹⁴ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 272–274.

important place.²¹⁵ *Letters* 8–17²¹⁶ are concerned with Paul's consecration as patriarch of Antioch. Within the latter group *Letters* 8 and 9 are confidential communications from Theodosius to the bishops of the East explaining why he wants Paul to fill the vacancy left by Sergius' death, and enjoining them to consecrate Paul clandestinely and have him send his synodical letter as soon as possible. *Letter* 10, addressed to Theodosius by the consecrating bishops Jacob Baradaeus, Eugenius of Seleucia (leader of the tritheists) and Eunomius of Amida, confirms that they have carried out his instructions. In reply, Theodosius writes an encomium of Paul (*Ep.* 10): he is the right man for difficult times and will bring peace to the church—probably the resolution of the tritheist dispute is meant here. Paul has already dispatched his synodical letter, which follows in the dossier (*Ep.* 13). In this, his first official communication as patriarch, he complains that Theodosius has deceived him, just as Abraham deceived his son Isaac (cf. Gen 22), by having him consecrated (if this is not a modesty *topos*, we might assume that Paul knew already the difficulties that lay ahead of him), but nonetheless presents his confession of faith, including the Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople I, Ephesus, Cyril's *Twelve Anathemata* against Nestorius, the *Henotikon* or instrument of union promulgated by Emperor Zeno in 482, and Theodosius' *Theological Discourse* itself. Paul condemns tritheism explicitly, leaving no doubt where he stands on the issue, and additionally rejects the doctrine of the Agnoetai. In reply (*Ep.* 14) Theodosius makes a similar confession of faith, and for his part too condemns tritheism and Agnoetic doctrine. The next three letters in this group are not from bishops but rather from archimandrites and monks, two to Theodosius sent by Jacob Baradaeus (*Epp.* 15 and 17) and one to Paul (*Ep.* 16), expressing their approval of Paul's consecration. From Jacob's involvement at this juncture it seems that he was putting his moral and charismatic authority behind Paul's appointment.²¹⁷

By now elderly and still in exile in Constantinople, Theodosius decided in 565 to manage his Egyptian patriarchate through the medium of Paul, to whom he gave the mandate to go there and perform ordinations in his stead. The fourth group of letters in the *DM* (*Epp.* 18–22),²¹⁸ all written by

²¹⁵ For the text and translation of this document and related pieces see Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 144–263.

²¹⁶ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 275–278.

²¹⁷ On Jacob's authority, which was not canonical, see D.D. Bundy, "Jacob Baradaeus. The State of Research, a Review of Sources and a New Approach", *Le Muséon* 91 (1978), pp. 45–86; Grillmeier, *Jesus der Christus* 2/3, pp. 197–200.

²¹⁸ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 278–279.

Theodosius, relate to this mission.²¹⁹ When Theodosius died on 22 June 566, the conflict between tritheists and anti-tritheists began in earnest, and is documented in the sixth part of the *DM* (*Epp.* 25–41).²²⁰ As explained in *Letter* 25, written by six anti-Chalcedonian bishops residing in Constantinople to the church in the East, while Theodosius was alive people subscribed to his *Theological Discourse*; after his death, however, some retracted their signatures and openly championed tritheism. The episcopal writers try to bring this divisive situation under control by documenting the chain of events on the basis of four *syndoktika*, one anathema and two letters, the texts of which the compiler then gives in full (*Epp.* 26–31).²²¹ In these documents it is alleged that Jacob Baradaeus and Bishop Theodore of Arabia are being touted as tritheists and Paul the Black is being opposed and defamed as patriarch. The conflict around tritheism appears particularly virulent in the eastern monasteries.

In *Letter* 33 Paul writes to Jacob and Theodore about these allegations, claiming that he is attacked verbally and in writing for his opposition to tritheism. Because his detractors claim that Jacob and Theodore are not only tritheists but also opposed to him, Paul requests that the two bishops make known in writing their commitment to Theodosius' *Theological Discourse* and to him. *Letter* 34 is the reply of Jacob and Theodore, acceding to this request and stating that they abide by everything that was done by Theodosius (this implicitly includes Paul's consecration). The extent of Jacob's authority in the East, particularly in the face of the unpopularity of Paul's consecration, can be seen from the next three letters (*Epp.* 35–37).²²² In the first of these, written by the eastern archimandrites to the anti-Chalcedonian clergy in Constantinople, relates that there is peace, thanks to the intervention of Jacob, who, however, has informed the archimandrites that conflict has arisen over the consecration of Paul. The writers accept Paul as patriarch. From this point as far as *Letter* 41, the emphasis is on managing the conflict over tritheism, which culminated in the excommunication of the leaders of the doctrine, Bishops Conon of Tarsus and Eugenius of Seleucia in 569. It seems that Conon and Eugenius wrote to Jacob, and that *Letter* 36 is Jacob's reply to them, in which he asks them to end the scandal of

²¹⁹ By contrast, the two letters in the fifth bracket (*Epp.* 23, 24) are out of chronological order because they concern Paul's consecration.

²²⁰ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 281–290.

²²¹ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 283–285.

²²² See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 287–288.

tritheism either by being reconciled with their opponents or else coming to the East to discuss the matter with him. In any case, Jacob states that nothing done by Theodosius can be changed (this again implicitly includes Paul's consecration) and that opposition to them is growing in Alexandria and elsewhere. Once more taking the initiative in resolving the double conflict of the tritheist controversy and the unpopularity of Paul, in *Letter* 37 Jacob writes to the anti-Chalcedonian bishops residing in Constantinople, asking them to forgive Eugenius and his followers if they renounce their heresy, but stating anew that he accepts all that Theodosius did, namely the condemnation of tritheism and the consecration of Paul. In the following letter (*Ep.* 38), from the bishops in the East to those in Constantinople, we read again of Theodosius condemnation of tritheism. The writers allege that, while the tritheists maintain that they accept Theodosius and his *Theological Discourse*, in fact they do not, and they ask the recipients to sign the letter if they are in communion with them. For their part, the bishops of the East accept everything that Theodosius did (including yet again, no doubt, Paul's consecration). *Letters* 39–41 deal with the increasing episcopal intervention in the case of Conon and Eugenius. In *Letter* 39 the synod of bishops in Constantinople writes to the anti-Chalcedonian church at large about their concerted endeavours and those of the eastern archimandrites to bring the tritheite leaders to heel, recounting how they had drawn up an encyclical (the previous letter) in which they carefully did not mention the attacks of Conon and Eugenius against orthodoxy or against Paul and other bishops. Even with this concession and the insistence of al-Harith, the tritheists refused to sign, as appears from a letter sent to them by Jacob and other bishops, which is transcribed in *Letter* 39. All interventions having failed, Conon and Eugenius were condemned.

The seventh group of documents (*Epp.* 42 and 43)²²³ comprises an outright defence of Paul the Black composed by a certain Sergius, a hermit in a monastery of Nicaea. The *Defence* itself (*Ep.* 42), written in letter-form, moves away from the tritheist debate and Paul's part in it to deal in particular with two of the most contentious events in his career: his part in the consecration of Theodore as patriarch of Alexandria in 575 and his communion with the Chalcedonians after the promulgation of the edict of Emperor Justin II in 571. In the course of the long *Defence*, Sergius cites from no fewer than seventeen documents, mostly episcopal letters, including an *Apology* written by Paul himself which is attested to only here. It is not clear whether

²²³ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 291–298.

this piece was composed in letter-form. In any case, the entire *Defence* is a tribute to the scholarly, if partisan, activity of Sergius and his access to impeccable sources. On the basis of this document Honigmann²²⁴ concluded that Sergius was the compiler of the whole dossier, but the hermit is designated explicitly as author only in *Letter* 42.²²⁵ In the following letter (*Ep.* 43) it is revealed that the author, presumably Sergius, agrees to meet with a certain priest, John the lame, to discuss the case of Paul (who by this time, November 580,²²⁶ was in hiding in or around Constantinople).

In the eighth and last bracket of letters (*Epp.* 44–45)²²⁷ we jump back to the short-lived consecration of Theodore as patriarch of Alexandria in 575 and the synodical letter which he wrote to Paul on that occasion (*Ep.* 44). Paul's reply is contained in *Letter* 45.²²⁸ It is very probable that these last two letters in the dossier were added by Sergius the hermit, who was exercised by Theodore's consecration and Paul's supposed role in it²²⁹—rightly so, for this incident ushered in the schism between the sees of Alexandria and Antioch that was to last at least until 616. If it is the case that Sergius was responsible for the addition of these two letters, it would strengthen the argument for his compilation of the dossier as a whole.

While the picture of religious conflict documented in the episcopal letters and other pieces in the *DM* has to be supplemented by the first-hand account provided by John of Ephesus, which dwells on the violence that was provoked by the tritheist dispute and the role of Paul in it, and to a lesser extent by the record preserved by Michael the Syrian, the dossier is a masterful defence of the controversial patriarch of Antioch. At the same time, it illustrates the extent to which the conflict aroused by tritheism influenced ecclesiastical politics in the East from the 550s to the 580s.²³⁰ This conflict continued to dog the patriarchates of Damian of Alexandria (578–606) and

²²⁴ *Évêques et évêchés*, p. 201.

²²⁵ In *Ep.* 43 the name of the writer is missing, but it appears to be the work of Sergius. See further Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, p. 297 n. 47.

²²⁶ On the date see Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, p. 297 with n. 48.

²²⁷ See Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 298–300.

²²⁸ This epistolary exchange is reported by John of Ephesus, *HE* 4.10; ed. Brooks, p. 191, trans. p. 143.

²²⁹ For this speculation see the references in Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, p. 300 with n. 52.

²³⁰ See further P. Allen, "Episcopal Succession in Antioch in the Sixth Century", in eds. Leemans et al., *Episcopal Elections*, pp. 23–38, for the argument that tritheism lay behind many of the episcopal elections and depositions in the patriarchate of Antioch, on both the anti-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian sides.

Peter of Antioch (formerly of Callinicum; 581–590),²³¹ to be laid to rest in some measure by the union of 616 between the two sees.²³² It is a telling fact that Damian's synodical letter, preserved by Michael the Syrian, stresses his opposition to tritheism, and after his signature ends with the prayer that the unity of the Trinity be preserved indissolubly.²³³

²³¹ See R.Y. Ebied, "Peter of Callinicum and Damian of Alexandria: The End of a Friendship", in ed. R.H. Fisher, *A Tribute to Arthus Vööbus: Studies in Early Christian Literature and its Environment* (Chicago, 1977), pp. 277–282; Ebied, Wickham, Van Roey, *Petrus Callinicensis*.

²³² On which see Michael the Syrian, *Chron.*; ed., trans. J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien Patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)* (Paris, 1899–1901; repr. Brussels, 1963); here 10.26, vol. 2, pp. 381–394; D. Olster, "Chalcedonian and Monophysite: The Union of 616", *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 27 (1985), pp. 93–108; F. Winkelmann, "Ägypten und Byzanz vor der arabischen Eroberung", *Byzantinoslavica* 40 (1979), pp. 161–182 at 168; Allen, *Sophronius of Jerusalem*, pp. 11, 24–26, 59, 60, 62, 145.

²³³ *Chron.* 10.14; ed. Chabot, vol. 2, pp. 325–332, signature and ending at p. 332.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL ABUSES

INTRODUCTION

Social abuses were no less common in Late Antiquity than today, though they rarely formed the subject of episcopal letters. We consider in this chapter several of the most common abuses: usury, extortionate taxation, theft, murder, the illegal slave trade and indentured child-labour. Obviously priests were sometimes involved in these acts, and it can be difficult to distinguish between social abuses by clerics and ecclesiastical corruption, which is also discussed here. Many of the abuses under discussion—such as the capture of freeborn persons, and the associated theft and violence—were the direct result of war. How far did episcopal strategies go towards correcting such abuses, and were the letters that bishops wrote on these subjects effectual? Our case-studies focus on social and clerical abuses during two brief but important episcopates in the fifth century: those of Synesius of Cyrene and Gelasius of Rome.

USURY

Lending at (often extortionate) interest rates was denounced in the earliest Christian writings, but like slavery and poverty it continued to exist as a part of late-antique life in the fifth and sixth centuries. Denunciations of the practice of usury are found more often in homilies than letters, the homilies of the Cappadocians Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nyssa being the most famous cases in point.¹ The practice of usury by clergy and lay

¹ See B.L. Ihssen, "Basil and Gregory's Sermons on Usury: Credit Where Credit is Due", *JECS* 16/3 (2008), pp. 403–430; Ihssen's chapter, "*That Which Has Been Wrung from Tears: Usury, the Greek Fathers and Catholic Social Teaching*", in eds. J. Leemans, B. Matz, J. Verstraeten, *Patristic Social Ethics. Issues and Challenges for 21st Century Christian Social Thought*, Catholic University of America Studies in Early Christianity (Washington, DC, 2011), pp. 124–160, provides a useful framework, with references mostly relating to the fourth century, especially the Cappadocians; see the literature cited there, p. 125 n. 3. On usury in general see

people was condemned at the Council of Carthage in 419,² following the ruling of the Council of Nicaea,³ and Augustine takes the established line that while it was permitted under secular law, it was to be condemned by the church.⁴ Byzantine writers and canonists of later ages took a more pragmatic approach, while condemning usury in principle.⁵ For all patristic writers who dealt with almsgiving, which is a proper if self-interested investment with God, usury was its antithesis. At least as early as the fourth century, the poet Commodian entertained the idea that almsgiving which resulted from usury would be rejected by God.⁶ This idea was taken up by Ambrose of Milan,⁷ and in a single letter of Augustine. Money that had been stolen, and subsequently given to the poor as alms, was a gift of no spiritual value to the donor.⁸

One of the few mentions of usury in our sources is contained in Leo of Rome's letter to the bishops of Catania, Etruria, Picenum and all the provinces of Italy on 10 October 443, where Leo forbids the taking of interest,

R.P. Maloney, "The Teaching of the Fathers on Usury: An Historical Study on the Development of Christian Thinking", *VC* 27 (1973), pp. 241–265; T. Moser, *Die patristische Zinslehre und ihre Ursprünge: vom Zinsgebot zum Wucherverbot* (Zürich, 1997).

² Canon 5, *Canones in causa Apiarii*; ed. Munier, CCSL 149, p. 134, 42–43, 47–48: 'nec omnino cuiquam clericorum liceat de qualibet re fenus accipere. ... Proinde quod in laicis reprehenditur id multo magis debet et in clericis praedamnari.' "It is completely forbidden for any cleric to accept interest on any transaction Accordingly, what is a subject for reproach among lay persons, is all the more reprehensible amongst clerics." Our translation.

³ Canon 7 of Nicaea "Concerning clerics who practise usury"; ed., trans. N.P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, (London, Washington, DC, 1990), vol. 1 (Nicaea I–Lateran V), pp. 14–14*. See p. 14* n. 1 for the pre-history of this canon.

⁴ See e.g. *Serm.* 77A.4 (NBA 30/1, pp. 550, 552); *Serm.* 86.3.3 (NBA 30/2, p. 10); *Serm.* 113.2.2 (NBA 30/2, pp. 414, 416); *Serm.* 239.5 (NBA 32/2, p. 626); *En. in Ps.* 36. *Serm.* 3.6 (NBA 25, pp. 818, 820); *En. in Ps.* 54.14 (NBA 26, pp. 100, 102). For the topic in Augustine see C.L. Hanson, "Usury and the World of St. Augustine of Hippo", *Augustinian Studies* 19 (1988), pp. 141–164; and A. Di Berardino, "La Défence du pauvre. Saint Augustin et l'usure", in eds. P.-Y. Fux, J.-M. Roessli, O. Wermelinger, *Saint Augustin: Africanité et universalité. Actes du colloque international Alger–Annaba, 1–7 avril 2002, Augustinus Afer*, Paradosis 45, 2 vols. (Fribourg, Switzerland, 2003), pp. 257–263 (on canonical literature).

⁵ See A.F. Laiou, "The Church, Economic Thought and Economic Practice", in ed. R.F. Taft, *The Christian East, Its Institutions and Its Thought: A Critical Reflection*, OCA 251 (Rome, 1996), pp. 435–464, esp. pp. 441–451; B.L. Ihssen, *They Who Give from Evil: The Response of the Eastern Church to Money-lending in the Early Christian Era* (Eugene, OR, 2012).

⁶ Commodian, *Instructiones divinae* 20; ed. J. Martin, CCSL 128 (Turnhout, 1960), p. 59. See further B. Ramsey, "Almsgiving in the Latin Church: The Late Fourth and Early Fifth Centuries", *Theological Studies* 42 (1982), pp. 226–259, at 250–251.

⁷ See, e.g. Ambrose, *De officiis* 1.145; ed. Davidson, *De officiis*, vol. 1, p. 200.

⁸ *Ep.* 153.24; NBA 22, pp. 550, 552; see also *Serm.* 359A.13; NBA 34, p. 338 on almsgiving from funds raised by theft, fraud and extortion.

not just by clerics but even laypersons.⁹ While the prohibition of usury for clergy was quite normal, Leo's extension of this prohibition to the laity was not. Leo insists that the only interest one should seek is what shall be received from Christ in the next world in return for good deeds here and now.¹⁰ This did not stop the church Fathers from taking over all the terminology of secular usury and using it of "holy usury", or lending at interest to God. Augustine is especially explicit that by giving alms, "You make a kind of mercantile loan. You invest here, you get paid back there."¹¹ God will even pay interest on the loan.¹²

Indeed, some bishops were only too aware of the irony, as this quotation from Severus of Antioch's letter to the *cubicularius* Misael on the economic plight of the see of Antioch, which could not afford to keep its clergy, shows:

But when I had had experience of the distressful state of affairs, and had seen in what a pitiable and wretched condition the fortunes of our holy church were, and that a great load of debts and of interest was hanging over it and threatening to overwhelm it, I forgot the spiritual laws: and now it seems to me a great thing to find men to lend; and meanwhile I make use of the term "interest" as if it were some lawful name.¹³

Similarly in *Letter 1.8* to the *dux* Timostratus, Severus laments:

That is that our holy church is very poor and needy, and that it is so much distressed and laden by the weight of interest, that it is hardly able even to hold up its head, but debts upon debts are added to its account, and interest upon interest is piled up against it [I] am wearied and stupefied like a man who is being strangled by creditors, and am compelled to find sustenance for need without sufficient incomes and revenues ...¹⁴

⁹ Leo, *Ep.* 4; ed. H. Wurm, "Epistula Decretalis S. Leonis Magni Romani Pontificis", *Apolinaris* 12 (1939), pp. 79–93.

¹⁰ Leo, *Ep.* 4.4; ed. Wurm, p. 91, 5–7: 'Fenus autem hoc solum aspicere et exercere debemus, ut quod hic misericorditer tribuimus, ab eo Domino, qui multipliciter et in perpetuum mansura retribuet, recipere valeamus.' "But the only usury we ought to seek and receive is this: that what we have given in mercy here, we may be able to recover from the Lord himself, who will repay many times over what will last forever." (Our translation).

¹¹ Augustine, *Serm.* 42.2; NBA 29, p. 746: 'Quasi fenus traiecitium facis. Hic das, ibi recipis.' See Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, pp. 130–131.

¹² Augustine, *Serm.* 86.3.3; NBA 30/2, p. 10.

¹³ Severus, *Ep.* 1.17; ed. Brooks, *Select Letters*, vol. 1, p. 71 (text), vol. 2, p. 64 (trans.).

¹⁴ *Ep.* 1.8; ed. Brooks, *Select Letters*, vol. 1, pp. 47–48 (text), vol. 2, pp. 43–44 (trans.). (513–518 CE). On the miserable financial situation of Antioch in the time of Severus see R. Roux, *L'exégèse biblique dans les Homélies cathédrales de Sévère d'Antioche*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 84 (Rome, 2002), p. 139 n. 19. Cf. F. Alpi, "Sévère d'Antioche et le législation ecclésiastique de Justinien", forthcoming in *Parole de l'Orient*.

EXTORTIONATE TAXATION

Extortion by government officials was also a problem that bishops had to deal with. The example of extortion by the governor of Ptolemais is discussed below in Case-study 1. More such cases were confronted by Theodoret in Cyrrhus, as we saw in our case-study on his dealing with natural disasters (Chapter 4). The same problems were evident in the West. For example, Augustine accused Romulus, a powerful convert, of being overly harsh in exacting taxes from his tenant farmers.¹⁵ Augustine's concern to defend the interests of the oppressed is evident in many of his letters, especially the recently discovered Divjak corpus.¹⁶ However, as Lepelley observes, the bishop of Hippo was largely powerless to help them in the face of oppression by even those imperial officials who were meant to defend their interests.¹⁷ The office of *defensor plebis* or *defensor civitatis* was founded by Valentinian I in 368 so that the poor of each city would have an advocate against oppression.¹⁸ Augustine laments the lack of suitable candidates for the office from a suitable social rank and elected by citizens among whom they enjoy a good reputation.¹⁹ Its ecclesiastical counterpart was the *defensor ecclesiae*, instituted first in Rome (367–368) to act on behalf of the poor and clergy in legal cases and later in North Africa after an appeal by the African bishops in 407.²⁰ The first instance of the office of *defensor ecclesiae* in papal letters appears in Innocent I's letter to Laurentius (probably bishop of Siena).²¹ Innocent reports that he had successfully used *defen-*

¹⁵ Augustine, *Ep.* 247; NBA 23, pp. 846–851, on tenant farmers on the plains of Bône. See Divjak, "Epistulae", col. 1004.

¹⁶ P. Allen, E. Morgan, "Augustine on Poverty", in Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, pp. 119–170; see also Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*; Finn, *Almsgiving*, *passim*.

¹⁷ Lepelley, "Facing Wealth and Poverty", p. 17.

¹⁸ *CTh* 1.29.1–8; vol. 1, pp. 64–66. On the fifth-century development of this office, see R.M. Frakes, *Contra potentium iniurias: The Defensor Civitatis and Late Roman Justice*, Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte 90 (Munich, 2001), pp. 165–193.

¹⁹ Augustine, *Ep.* 22.2*; NBA 23A, pp. 192–194. See F. Jacques, "Le défenseur de cité d'après la Lettre 22* de saint Augustin", *Revue des études augustinienes* 32 (1986), pp. 56–73. Cf. Augustine, *Ep.* 20*.6; NBA 23A, pp. 164–166, where a *defensor ecclesiae* is named as part of the company of Antony of Fussala.

²⁰ *Collectio Avellana* 6; ed. O. Günther, *Epistulae imperatorum pontificum aliorum inde ab anno CCCLXVII usque ad annum DLIII datae, Avellana quae dicitur Collectio*, CSEL 35 (Prague, 1895), vol. 1, p. 349; *Reg. eccl. Cathag. Excerpta* 87; ed. Munier, CCSL 149, p. 215. See C. Humfress, "A New Legal Cosmos: Late Roman Lawyers and the Early Medieval Church", in eds. P. Lineham, J.L. Nelson, *The Medieval World* (London, New York, 2001), pp. 557–575.

²¹ Innocent I, *Ep.* 41; PL 20, 607–608. See the discussion of G.D. Dunn, "Innocent I's Letter

sores ecclesiae to remove heretical Photinians from Rome. The first reference in *LP* is during the pontificate of Felix III, who sent an unnamed *defensor* as legate to Constantinople in the course of the Acacian schism.²² *Defensores ecclesiae* were also used to investigate claims of corruption by clergy, as in the case of the deacon Agnellus, mentioned in Case-study 2 below. Bishops Rufinus and Justus are ordered to initiate a trial in the presence of Laurentius, *defensor* of the Roman church, to investigate the calumnies brought against the deacon Agnellus of Verulana.²³ Other cases of corruption within the church are investigated below. Unfortunately the *defensores ecclesiae* themselves were not always above reproach. Pelagius I reproves the *defensor* of Apulia for falsifying the date in collecting payments and accumulating funds, thus causing financial and administrative headaches for the bishop of Rome.²⁴

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The trade in human beings was as common in Late Antiquity as it is today. Among the 29 Divjak letters that came to light in the early 1980s are several which give an astonishing picture of late-antique society, and describe social abuses hitherto unknown to us in such detail, including human trafficking. Trafficking was an abuse which Augustine attributed to a crisis in the legal system because the penalty for such trafficking was very harsh and consequently not applied.

From the big picture of human trafficking in North Africa Augustine passes to the smaller picture, namely instances of the activities of slave-traders in Hippo itself, where women tricked other women into being captured and sold, a farmer sold his wife, and one of Augustine's monks was nearly abducted.²⁵ It is important to note that only the slavery of free-born citizens was deemed a social abuse. "Normal" slavery, in accordance with Justinianic law, was considered a necessary part of the social order, and was

to Lawrence: Photinians, Bonosians, and the *Defensores Ecclesiae*," *JTS* ns 63 (2012), pp. 136–155. Cf. C. Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 262–263, on the *defensor ecclesiae*.

²² *LP* 1, p. 252.

²³ *Frag.* 15 to Bishops Rufinus and Justus; ed. Thiel, pp. 491–492.

²⁴ Pelagius I, *Ep.* 12 to Dulcitius, *defensor* of Apulia. January 558 (Jaffé 949); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 41–42.

²⁵ Augustine, *Ep.* 10*.6; NBA 23A, p. 84.

endorsed by most bishops, while they enjoined fair treatment of masters and respectful obedience of slaves.²⁶

INDENTURED CHILD LABOUR

The indentured labour of free children was an unfortunate bi-product of a system of radically insecure economic structures in Late Antiquity.²⁷ Important witnesses to the existence of this phenomenon are *Letter* 10* and *Letter* 24* of Augustine,²⁸ dating perhaps from between 422 and 432.²⁹ In the first of these letters Augustine denounces the current practice of human trafficking, whereby citizens are kidnapped and sold into slavery. He adds:

Only a few are found to have been sold by their parents and these people buy them, not as Roman law permits, as indentured servants for a period of 25 years, but in fact they buy them as slaves and sell them across the sea as slaves.³⁰

We are thus dealing with two distinct systems of exploitation: the first involves the kidnapping of free persons who are sold into slavery; the second concerns parents who sell their children as indentured labourers for 25 years, a practice countenanced, says Augustine, by Roman law. Here he attaches no stigma to the practice, but the fact that he adduces it again in *Letter* 24* suggests that he was uncertain about it. In this second letter, he asks Eustochius, an expert in jurisprudence, about the legality of such indentured labour, which sometimes turns out to be the perpetual servitude of free-born children and young people. We can assume that it was the reversal of the inalienable Roman right of free-born citizens to remain free that lay at the bottom of Augustine's concern, for, as Eno observes, the practice of indentured labour was the beginning of the "long process of

²⁶ On these themes at the end of our period, see A. Serfass, "Slavery and Pope Gregory the Great", *J ECS* 14/1 (2006), pp. 77–103.

²⁷ On Augustine's treatment of the themes of hiring of child labour and sale of children in the Divjak letters, see M. Humbert, "Enfants à louer et à vendre: Augustin et l'autorité parentale", in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 189–204. On children generally in the Christian early centuries, in pagan, Christian and Jewish contexts, see C.B. Horn, J.W. Martens, eds., *Let the Little Children Come to Me: Children and Childhood in Early Christianity* (Washington, DC, 2009), pp. 166–175.

²⁸ *Ep.* 10* to Alypius in Italy (NBA 23A, pp. 78–87); *Ep.* 24* (NBA 23A, pp. 212–215). Trans. with introductions by R.B. Eno, *Saint Augustine. Letters Volume VI (1*–29*)*, FOTC 81 (Washington, DC, 1989), pp. 74–80, and pp. 171–174, respectively.

²⁹ On the dating see Eno, *ibid.*, p. 172.

³⁰ NBA 23A, pp. 80–81; trans. Eno, *ibid.*, p. 77.

being transformed into a proto-serfdom of the type we usually associate with the Middle Ages".³¹ These two Divjak letters have received appropriate scholarly attention.³² The fact that indentured child labour is not considered in scholarship on child labour in earlier periods³³ reinforces the impression that it was a late-antique phenomenon.

ALIENATION OF CHURCH PROPERTY

Cases of embezzlement and the alienation of church property are rife throughout these centuries. Augustine complained to Xanthippus, primate of Numidia, about a priest who embezzled money there.³⁴ Severus regulated the process of hearing the charges against a presbyter, Julian of Tarsus, who was accused of taking church property.³⁵ Ruricius of Limoges seems to refer to Bishop Chronopius exceeding his rights or jurisdiction in the diocese of Gemiliacum (Jumilhac-le-Grand in Dordogne) with respect to property.³⁶ Some of these remonstrations seem below episcopal dignity: Ruricius was forced to reprimand a cleric who stole pigs belonging to the church in Auxerre (*Ep.* 2.14 and *Ep.* 2.51). Leo I condemns the bishops of Taurmenium (Taormino) and Panormus who have been impoverishing their clergy through the misappropriation of church funds.³⁷ The clergy of Taurmenium had complained of being reduced to destitution "because its bishop had squandered all its estates by selling, giving away, and otherwise disposing of them".³⁸ The clergy of Panormus had made similar charges against their former bishop. In a decree that is meant to be binding on all bishops of Sicily, Leo declares that any priest, deacon or cleric of any rank who has connived

³¹ Eno, *ibid.*, p. 172.

³² See in particular M. Humbert, "Enfants à louer et à vendre"; C. Lepelley, "Liberté, colonat et esclavage", both in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 189–204, and pp. 329–342 respectively.

³³ See for example K.R. Bradley, *Discovering the Roman Family. Studies in Roman Social History* (New York, Oxford, 1991), where it is not considered in Chapter 5, "Child Labour in the Roman World", pp. 103–124; Horn, Martens, *Let the Little Children Come to Me*, where few late-antique sources are used.

³⁴ Augustine, *Ep.* 65; NBA 21/1, pp. 538–541. 401 or 402 CE.

³⁵ Severus, *Select Letters* 1.40; ed. Brooks, vol. 1, p. 126 (text); vol. 2, p. 113 (trans.).

³⁶ Ruricius, *Ep.* 2.6.3; ed. Krusch, MGH AA 8, p. 316, 18–23. The details of Chronopius' infraction are unclear: see Mathisen, trans., *Ruricius of Limoges*, pp. 142–144. Ruricius mentions a previous letter to Chronopius about this matter, which was presumably ignored.

³⁷ Leo I, *Ep.* 17 to all bishops in Sicily, on 21 October 447; PL 54, 703–706. See Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, 200.

³⁸ PL 54, 704B: '... eo quod omnia ejus praedia, vendendo, donando, et diversis modis alienando, episcopus dissiparet.' Our translation.

to defraud the church is to be punished with deposition and excommunication.³⁹ Not only the bishops but all the clergy must preserve unimpaired the gifts of those “who have contributed their own substance to churches for the salvation of their souls”.⁴⁰ This last statement reflects the common fear that those who made bequests would lose the spiritual benefit of those gifts if they were alienated from church property. The rationale is the same as that underlying Augustine’s proscription of giving stolen goods as alms. There exists in these bishops’ minds a very real link between the material good and the eternal future of the giver, even after death. It is interesting to note that Leo himself did not hesitate to reconstitute the emperor Constantine’s gifts to the Roman church of six large silver jugs, after the Vandals had stripped the church of its holy vessels in 452/53.⁴¹ In 559 Pelagius agreed to Bishop Hostilius’ request for permission to go after clerics who had removed sacred vessels from churches.⁴²

CORRUPTION, WITHIN THE CHURCH AND WITHOUT

Bishops simply overlooked misdemeanours when it suited them, or did not regard them as such. Witness Gelasius’ attitude towards the affair of Faustus, who was not able to claim the balance of a “bond” that he gave to the *defensor ecclesiae* Eucharistus, after Faustus failed to gain the episcopate in Volterra, which he had confidently expected to attain. This affair will be explored more fully in Case-study 2 below.⁴³ Bishops of Rome themselves could be subject to abuse and corruption, and even excommunicated by other western bishops, as we saw in the case of Vigilius, bishop of Rome (537–555), in Chapter 3.⁴⁴ The use of forgery and corruption to break his position during the Three Chapters controversy is outlined in two western letters.⁴⁵ At the

³⁹ PL 54, 705A–706A: ‘Nam presbyteri, vel diaconi, aut cujuscumque ordinis clerici, qui conuiventiam in Ecclesiae damna miscuerint, sciant se et ordine et communione privandos.’

⁴⁰ PL 54, 706A: ‘et eorum munera illibata permaneant, qui pro animarum suarum salute propriam substantiam ecclesiis contulerunt.’ Our translation.

⁴¹ *LP* 1, p. 239.

⁴² Pelagius I, *Ep.* 51 to Bishop Hostilius (Jaffé 1010); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 132–133 (Middle to end of March 559).

⁴³ The case of venality is also discussed by S.R. Huebner, “Currencies of Power: The Venality of Offices in the Later Roman Empire”, in eds. A. Cain, N. Lenski, *The Power of Religion in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2009), pp. 167–180.

⁴⁴ Case-study 3. See the bibliography cited there.

⁴⁵ *Encyclical Letter*; ed. Schwartz, *Vigiliusbriefe*, pp. 1–10; PL 69, 53–59 (written 5 February, 552). Cf. *Epistula clericorum Mediolanensium ad legatos Francorum, qui Constantinopolim*

end of 545, on the eve of the Gothic invasion, Vigilius left Rome with almost his entire clergy under Byzantine military escort, stopping for more than a year in Sicily en route to Constantinople. Sotinel observes that most of our sources for the sordid affair of Vigilius are the letters and encyclicals of Vigilius himself and other western letters and (eastern) chronicles.⁴⁶ We would therefore expect them to present the western view. For instance, the reasons for Vigilius' arrest during Mass and removal to Sicily for almost a year in 545 may have been more to do with preserving his safety during the Gothic invasions than imperial pressure to concur on the issue of the Three Chapters.⁴⁷ From 547 until 554 he was subjected to imperial pressure to accede to the condemnation of the Three Chapters. His attempts to find a compromise met with serious opposition in the West, particularly in Africa where the pope was excommunicated. At first he tried to avoid his obligations to Justinian, and took refuge in the monastery of Hormisdas, or the neighbouring church of Saints Peter and Paul.⁴⁸ The ninth-century chronicler Theophanes Confessor relates that when Vigilius was being dragged out of the sanctuary, he tried to resist by hanging onto the pillars of the altar, but since he was a large, heavy man, the pillars collapsed under his weight.⁴⁹ Thus we find even eastern sources concurring with the western record of abuses perpetrated against this bishop of Rome, however culpable he might have been.

An abuse repeated often enough may cease to offend. So Cyril of Alexandria exploited the vague definition of "gifts" offered to the imperial court to try to influence their decision on matters of doctrine. Cyril is reported to have given 200 pounds of gold and quantities of furnishings, just for starters, all given as "gifts" to the imperial court before the Council of Ephesus.⁵⁰ In doing so, Cyril followed a venerable tradition of Alexandrian patriarchs of using the wealth at their disposal for bribes in the imperial court. Compare

proficiscebatur; ed. Schwartz, *Vigiliusbriefer*, pp. 18–25 (written before 23 December 551). Both are translated by Price, *Acts of the Council of Constantinople*, vol. 1, pp. 170–179 and pp. 165–170 respectively.

⁴⁶ Sotinel, "Emperors and Popes", p. 283.

⁴⁷ Sotinel, "Emperors and Popes", p. 281.

⁴⁸ C. Mango, R. Scott (trans.), *The Chronicle of Theophanes the Confessor. Byzantine and Near Eastern history, AD 284–813* (Oxford, 1997), p. 328 n. 5.

⁴⁹ Theophanes Confessor, *Chronographia*, AM 6039 (546/47 CE); ed. C. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia* (Leipzig, 1885; repr. Hildesheim, 1980), vol. 1, p. 225.

⁵⁰ As reported by the eunuch Chryseros or Chrysoretos: see Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria. Select Letters*, p. 66 n. 8, where Wickham gives a list of the gifts. Wickham refers to the article of P. Batiffol, "Les présents de saint Cyrille à la cour de Constantinople", *Études de liturgie et d'archéologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1919), pp. 154–179.

Gregory of Nazianzus, who related as fact a rumour that George of Cappadocia, later the Arian bishop of Alexandria, had as a contractor embezzled public funds for the pork dole and soldiers' rations.⁵¹ In a letter to the couple John and Hilaria, Pelagius comments that laws prevent a pontiff from bequeathing the goods acquired during his term as pope.⁵² Following the principle that laws were passed to deal with existing problems, we can surmise that this had already become an issue for bishops of Rome in particular. Sabine Huebner, in her useful study of the recruitment of clergy in fifth and sixth centuries, notes that charging of payments in return for clerical office became commonplace and eventually was sanctioned.⁵³ Justinian legitimized a "consecration payment" payable to bishops and the assisting clergy. He also sanctioned handing over all or part of a clerical candidate's property.⁵⁴ Huebner concludes, "The clergy, therefore, should be regarded as an institution that was tightly interwoven with the secular social structure of later Roman society."⁵⁵

Other social abuses such as incest, domestic violence and robbery, *inter alia*, are dealt with incidentally in letters pertaining to other subjects. In two letters (*Epp.* 7.2 and 8.3) Cyril of Alexandria attributes the violence and robbery prevalent in Egyptian communities as the cause of the destruction of crops by fire and hail and resulting famine.⁵⁶ In *Letter* 34 to Eusebius, a Roman official in Hippo, Augustine complains about a young man who, after being chastised by the catholic bishop for beating and threatening his mother, has gone over to the Donatists and has been rebaptized. Augustine asks for mediation with the Donatist bishop who baptized him.⁵⁷ One suspects that his misdemeanours are less serious for Augustine than the fact that he has defected to the rival sect. Theodoret remonstrates with three magistrates in the town of Zeugma because they have sanctioned marriages between their daughters and their nephews, and between uncles and their

⁵¹ *Or.* 21.16; ed. J. Mossay, *Gregoire de Nazianze. Discours 20–23*, SC 270 (Paris, 1980), pp. 142–144.

⁵² Pelagius I, *Ep.* 26 to Hilaria and John (Jaffé 985); eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 81 (February 559). Pelagius expresses his desire to increase the church's goods "not materially but by sincerity of heart" ('nostri tamen studii est, ecclesiasticas utilitates non tam facultatibus quam sinceritate mentis augere').

⁵³ Huebner, "Currencies of Power", p. 175, n. 46.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁵⁶ See our Case-study on Cyril in Chapter 4.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Ep.* 34 (NBA 21/1, pp. 234–240) (395/396); cf. *Ep.* 35 (NBA 21/1, pp. 242–248). See Divjak, "Epistulae", col. 952.

nieces. Such incestuous marriages, he proclaims, are fitting for Persians but not for Roman Christians.⁵⁸ Importantly, it is not appropriate for magistrates who call themselves Christian and are from episcopal families to sanction such unions against divine law. Several more cases of social abuse are discussed in relation to Synesius of Cyrene and Gelasius of Rome in the case-studies at the end of this chapter.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important avenues of assistance for late-antique bishops when they had to manage social abuses either with regard to civil or church office-holders was their epistolary networks. These late-antique bishops' axes, horizons, and culture demonstrate the validity of the arguments adduced by several scholars recently,⁵⁹ namely that, while bishops were often impotent in the face of ecclesiastical or civil crisis, and were not bothered about many infringements of what today we consider basic human rights,⁶⁰ we do find them trying to intervene in cases of human trafficking, indentured labour of free-born children, usury, extortionate taxation and above all in cases of theft and fraudulent management of church property. The question remains, however, were these actions undertaken by the bishop as *curialis* (like Synesius) or as bishop *per se*? Theodoret also seems to have undertaken his oversight of Cyrrhus much as a provincial governor would have done. The next best example of such intervention is Gelasius, at the end of the fifth century. While Gelasius' decretals, discussed in the Case-study below, provide useful insights into the many ecclesiastical abuses of his time, they do not do justice to the fact that in general he sought to correct abuse by recourse to both ecclesiastical and civil law. The legal avenues that were open to bishops to pursue such infringements are examined in the next chapter on the breakdown of the structures of dependence.

⁵⁸ Theodoret, *Ep.* VIII; ed. Azéma, vol. 1, p. 80.

⁵⁹ See Lepelley, "Facing Wealth and Poverty", pp. 16–17; K. Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice in the Age of Augustine* (Philadelphia, 2007), pp. 38–43; Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*.

⁶⁰ See, for example, S.R. Holman, "The Entitled Poor. Human Rights Language in the Cappadocians", *Doctores Ecclesiae*, in *Pro Ecclesia* 9/4 (2000), pp. 476–488.

CASE-STUDIES OF SOCIAL ABUSE MANAGEMENT

Case-Study 1. *Synesius of Cyrene (411–413)*

In his short bishopric of about eighteen months (February 411–mid-413),⁶¹ Synesius was faced with various crises, both private and public: the death of his last remaining child,⁶² barbarian incursions which forced him to join the citizens of his town on the ramparts “several times a month”⁶³ and a crisis of conscience regarding his anxieties about being bishop.⁶⁴ He is one of few bishops known to have addressed a letter of a personal nature to a woman, albeit a woman of some reputation, the pagan philosopher and mathematician Hypatia, his former teacher in Alexandria.⁶⁵

Synesius’ concern to safeguard the law is evident from early on in his pontificate, with his letter to Troilus, sophist, philosopher and courtier of the praetorian prefect Anthemius in Constantinople, on the pitiable situation of Pentapolis, which was suffering from famine, barbarian incursions and the corruption of local governors.⁶⁶ Synesius beseeches Anthemius to uphold the law in Libya and to send more law-abiding magistrates than those to whose corrupt rule the citizens of Cyrenaica have been subject:

Now, we ask nothing new, we only beg Anthemius to enforce the laws of which he is the guardian, and which are worthy of veneration owing to their antiquity, for in this consists the very sacredness of law; or, if it seem best to any one, let him enforce the newer edicts which register what one might call a still living kingdom.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Synesius’ episcopate has been variously calculated; we accept the chronology established by D. Roques, *Études sur la Correspondance*, pp. 11–64. According to Roques’ findings, Synesius was elected bishop of Ptolemais probably in the first half of February 411; he was consecrated bishop by Patriarch Theophilus of Alexandria only on 1 January 412, and died mid-413. We are therefore considering an extremely short episcopate, which nonetheless, following this chronology, produced a total of 49 surviving letters out of 156. Elements of this case-study have been presented in Allen, “Brushes with the *Imperium*”, in eds. Nathan, Garland, Basileia: *Essays*, pp. 45–53.

⁶² *Ep.* 89; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 211, 6–7.

⁶³ *Ep.* 89; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 211, 4. Cf. *Epp.* 69, 73 and 94.

⁶⁴ *Epp.* 11, 13, 41, 96 and 105.

⁶⁵ *Ep.* 16; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, pp. 26–27 (beginning of 413) on his personal misfortunes. On other letters to women, see Chapter 2 above, “The question of audience: public or private?”

⁶⁶ *Ep.* 73; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, pp. 194–197 (July/Aug. 411). On Troilus see *PLRE* 2, p. 1128, s.v. Troilus 1.

⁶⁷ *Ep.* 73; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, pp. 196, 78–197, 3. Trans. A. Fitzgerald, *Letters of Synesius of Cyrene* (London, 1926), p. 165.

Again, in a letter at the beginning of 412, Synesius reports to Theophilus of Alexandria how he travelled through the dangers of barbarian territory to two villages “on the very frontier of arid Libya” to call a meeting, at which he accused the inhabitants of bribery and conspiracy.

Amongst the most prominent citizens some protested with exclamations of wrath, while others, mounting upon any available pedestal the better to be heard, addressed themselves at length to the gathering. I at once accused these of bribery and conspiracy, and ordered the ushers to hustle and to expel them from the meeting ...⁶⁸

Synesius' complaints of corruption took focus in his dispute with the civil governor of Pentapolis, an affair which consumed him in about one-eighth of the total number of his surviving letters.⁶⁹ The dispute, which lasted just two months from February to March 412, is a remarkable example of both public and private crisis management of a series of social abuses, in that Andronicus was a cruel and rapacious official against whom, until the dénouement of the crisis, Synesius as bishop appeared ineffectual and depressed. The governor, a *parvenu* as the well-born bishop likes to point out,⁷⁰ was known for his panoply of sophisticated instruments of torture and his merciless extortion of gold from members of the curial class. Andronicus is depicted by Synesius as the latest in a list of disasters to have befallen Pentapolis, from the earthquake of 365 over 40 years earlier, to the recent plagues of grasshoppers, famine and fires of the year 411, and the raids of the Berber Ausurians in the same year.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Ep.* 66; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, pp. 173–186 (end Jan. 412). Trans. Fitzgerald, pp. 147–149.

⁶⁹ The letters which pertain to the dispute are *Epp.* 39, 41, 42, 72, 73, 79, 80, 90. This episode has been studied, notably by C. Lacombrade, *Synésios hellène et chrétien* (Paris, 1951), pp. 237–248; Lizzi, *Il potere*, pp. 85–111; Roques, *Synésios de Cyrène et la Cyrénaïque*, pp. 366–370; Roques, *Études*, pp. 137–159 (chronology); A. Garzya, “Sinesio e Andronico”, in *Hestiasis. Studi di tarda antichità offerta a Salvatore Costanza* (Messina, 1998), pp. 93–103; L. Cracco Ruggini, “‘Vir sanctus’: il vescovo e il suo ‘pubblico ufficio sacro’ nella città”, in eds. Rebillard, Sotinel, *L'évêque dans la cité*, pp. 3–15; I. Tanaseanu-Döbler, *Konversion zur Philosophie in der Spätantike: Kaiser Julian und Synesios von Kyrene*, Potsdamer Altertumwissenschaftliche Beiträge 23 (Stuttgart, 2008), pp. 280–281.

⁷⁰ See eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 128; cf. *Ep.* 41; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 49, 237–258, on Synesius' rather pompous comparison of Andronicus' meagre pedigree, that of a *homo novus*, with his own curial status. On Synesius' penchant for self-display in this episode see I. Tanaseanu, “Between Philosophy and the Church: Synesius of Cyrene's Self-Display in his Writings”, *Communication presented at the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies, London 2006* (VI.3 Theology, Texts, Orthodoxy), www.wraith.plus.com/byzcong/comms/Tanaseanu_paper.pdf, accessed 17 June 2012.

⁷¹ *Ep.* 42; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 70, 9. On the chronology see Roques, *Études*,

One of Andronicus' victims was a fellow *curialis* who was being starved to death in prison. Synesius, who was a relatively young man and presumably athletic because of his well-known passion for hunting, thought once of storming the ramparts of the prison, but decided against it.⁷² He *did* visit a well-born citizen who was being tortured while incarcerated, which infuriated Andronicus and led him to repeated blasphemies against Christ.⁷³ The inhabitants looked to Synesius for help, not so much, it seems, because of his episcopal office as because of his standing as *curialis* in his native region and his previous successes in the civil realm as ambassador to Constantinople.⁷⁴ However, the bishop felt himself powerless and, overcome also by the recent death of his oldest son and last remaining child, remained impervious to the consolations of philosophy and of prayer.⁷⁵ As he wrote to the bishops in his first complaint against the atrocities Andronicus was committing in Cyrene: "... when I am overwhelmed by these things, I am forgetful of myself, and only injure the success of the business I am engaged in. For it is impossible to do anything well if one hates it."⁷⁶

It will by now be obvious to the reader that our evidence of the dispute between official and bishop is one-sided in that we rely totally on Synesius' account, the main aim of which is to demonize his opponent.⁷⁷ What is significant in the crisis precipitated by the conduct of Andronicus is that neither bishop nor citizens appealed to the law. Nor apparently did the bishop of Ptolemaïs consult his patron and senior colleague in Africa, Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria. Instead Synesius pronounced an edict of excom-

p. 145. *Ep.* 69 to Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 190 (mid-412), laments the effects of the barbarian incursions.

⁷² *Ep.* 41; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 48, 230–249, 1. See Tanaseanu, "Between Philosophy and the Church", n. 14, on the duty of bishops to visit the incarcerated.

⁷³ *Ep.* 42; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 56, 50–54.

⁷⁴ *Ep.* 41; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 46, 166–178. Pace Lizzi, *Il potere*, p. 85, who ignores Synesius' civic standing in Pentapolis and sees him in this episode as the bishop-protector. Her comparison of Synesius' intervention with the pro-active efforts of Basil of Caesarea to deal with the severe famine in Cappadocia in 368 (p. 83) also ignores the standing that the wealthy, well-born Basil enjoyed, quite apart from his role as bishop.

⁷⁵ *Ep.* 41; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 47, 200–201.

⁷⁶ *Ep.* 41; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 53, 342–345. Trans. Fitzgerald, p. 139. Cf. *ibid.*, eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 51, 297–300. Trans. Fitzgerald, p. 137: Οὐ καταδικάζω τῶν ἐπισκόπων τοὺς ἐν τοῖς πράγμασιν, ἀλλ' ἑμαυτὸν εἰδὼς μὲν εἰς θάτερον ἐξικνούμενον ἄγαν τῶν δυναμένων ἑκάτερα. "I do not condemn bishops who are occupied with practical matters, for knowing of myself that I am hardly equal to the one of two things, I admire all the more those who are competent in both fields."

⁷⁷ See further Lizzi, *Il potere*, p. 105.

munication on the governor which was sent to all bishops in the region and was meant to extend to all churches in the Christian world (*Ep.* 41). Synesius had, however, just been consecrated bishop, and other longer-serving bishops objected to his excommunication of Andronicus, claiming that the governor needed to be given the chance to repent of his crimes.⁷⁸ Far from repenting, Andronicus subsequently confiscated and sold public property, and committed murder.⁷⁹ The sentence of excommunication was then ratified, banning Andronicus and his accomplice Thoas from churches and communion everywhere, and stating that Christians would refuse to shake Andronicus' hand or sit at table with him.⁸⁰ While sentences of excommunication were not new in this period,⁸¹ the fate imposed on Andronicus was harsh because the excommunicate should have had the possibility of doing penance and/or seeking asylum, although the first legislation recognizing the right of ecclesiastical asylum was not passed until 21 November 419 in the West and 23 March 431 in the East.⁸²

Synesius also effectively denied Andronicus the right of asylum, and there was consequently no option for the official but to leave town and his job. At the end of March 412 Synesius wrote to his friend Anastasius in Constantinople asking him to secure justice at the imperial court for the victims of Andronicus.⁸³ However, a second redaction of *Letter* 42, in which Andronicus' excommunication is promulgated, demonstrates that Synesius had a change of heart about the governor's fate and sought to have the sentence mitigated.⁸⁴ To this effect he wrote to Theophilus,⁸⁵ whom, as we noted before, he had not bothered to consult in the first instance. Nonetheless, in a stroke of administrative genius, albeit one that could not be considered civilly legal, the bishop of Ptolemaïs had succeeded in

⁷⁸ *Ep.* 72; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 192, 18–28.

⁷⁹ *Ep.* 72; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 193, 30–32.

⁸⁰ *Ep.* 42; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 57, 83–86.

⁸¹ The statement of Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, p. 160, that Synesius had “a new arsenal of ecclesiastical instruments of reprimand and punishment, including excommunication”, should be understood in the sense that they were “new” to pagans, being introduced by Christianity.

⁸² See further Roques, *Études*, p. 369.

⁸³ *Ep.* 79; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, pp. 201–206 (end March 412). Lizzi, *Il potere*, p. 103, notes on the basis of *Ep.* 48 to Anastasius that Synesius' representations to Constantinople received a cold reception.

⁸⁴ On the redaction see Lizzi, *Il potere*, p. 110; Garzya, “Sinesio e Andronico”; Garzya, Roques, vol. 1, p. 143 n. 3.

⁸⁵ *Ep.* 90.

ridding himself and his people of a crisis of considerable proportions. We can compare the import of *Letter* 156, where Synesius again intervenes in his role as *curialis*-bishop in securing justice: “My job is to serve all those I can”.⁸⁶ This makes him, as the editors note, a kind of *pater populi*.⁸⁷ Did he see this as a religious role, or a political one?

As we know, at the time of the Andronicus affair Synesius was a new bishop, and one who admitted problems with central aspects of Christian doctrine. It is consequently no exaggeration to say that in the Andronicus affair he was acting more as a *curialis* than a bishop: he was in good standing with the *imperium* in Constantinople and with the local people, and as a very new bishop appears to have been overruled by more senior colleagues with regard to the severity of his sentence on Andronicus. Roques’ comment that Synesius can be ranked among the authentic protectors of God’s people only with caution is therefore apposite.⁸⁸ In any case, Synesius’ representations to his influential friends in the imperial court at Constantinople concerning the Andronicus affair are more explicit than those he made to his diocesan bishops.⁸⁹ As an example we adduce his letter to his former friend, Anastasius, who had been on the side of Andronicus, and with whom Synesius tried to build bridges after the dispute.⁹⁰ All of this tends to support Lizzi’s contention that in this event Synesius’ political motives are more apparent than his religious ones.⁹¹

A final letter supports this conclusion. In *Letter* 90 to Theophilus of Alexandria, Synesius appeals for mercy for Andronicus, who, a former perpetrator of injustice, is now treated unjustly, in his view.⁹² There he aligns mercy (ἐλεεῖν) with justice (τὸ δίκαιον), with Theophilus invoked as the safeguarder of justice for the church.⁹³ “If your sacred person judges that this man is worthy of any interest, I shall welcome this as a signal proof that God has not yet entirely abandoned him,” Synesius writes.⁹⁴ So far so Christian,

⁸⁶ *Ep.* 156 to the lawyer Dometian; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, pp. 306–307, at p. 307, 4–5. Our translation.

⁸⁷ Eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 307 n. 4.

⁸⁸ Roques, *Études*, p. 371.

⁸⁹ Lizzi, *Il potere*, p. 87.

⁹⁰ *Ep.* 48; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 2, p. 67 (mid-412). On Anastasius, an influential figure in the imperial court, see *PLRE* 2, pp. 77–88, s.v. Anastasius 2.

⁹¹ Lizzi, *Il potere*, p. 107.

⁹² *Ep.* 90; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, pp. 211–212 (mid-412).

⁹³ *Ep.* 90; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 211, 1–7.

⁹⁴ *Ep.* 90; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 212, 1–4. Trans. Fitzgerald, pp. 177–178.

but a worrying note is struck by Synesius' admission that, on Andronicus' account, "we have incurred the displeasure of those now in power",⁹⁵ leaving the reader to wonder whether the bishop was more concerned with the meting out of punishment in a way that was not disproportionate to the governor's sins, or with the loss of his former friends in Constantinople.

Case-Study 2. *Gelasius of Rome (492–496)*⁹⁶

Apart from his dealings with Constantinople and the East, most of Gelasius' letters refer to situations in Italy, rather than in Gaul or other areas of the West,⁹⁷ and among these the bulk of the surviving letters is addressed to bishops and others in the area around Rome and to its south. These pieces provide us with a window onto many social and clerical abuses in Italy at the time, for example, murder and violence, unlawful ordination, embezzlement, problems with wills and heirs, property disputes, disregard for the right to asylum, and use of magical practices. In addition to these witnesses to abuses in factual situations, we have *Letter 14*, a collection of decretals outlining theoretically right conduct in church administration, that provides us with a check-list of the kinds of ecclesiastical abuse that Gelasius was trying to prevent.

Three letters apprise us of the murder of bishops. *Letter 36*⁹⁸ relates the death of a bishop in an unknown see after a fall and ensuing riot, for which the archdeacon Asellus is blamed. Not only did he not intervene to save the bishop but afterwards, as his heir, claimed the property of the deceased and engineered his election to the episcopate without consulting Rome (or more particularly Gelasius). The pope claims that "an incision was found in the episcopal book", perhaps meaning that Asellus had the name of the dead bishop excised from the records. In any case, Gelasius relates what *should* have happened: on the death of a bishop his passing has to be reported to Rome, a *visitor* appointed, and a successor elected. For his violation of the rules Asellus is to be removed from his rank of archdeacon, and if he is found guilty by church law he is to be made to reform his ways. There were more extreme cases of murder and violence in Squillace, a town in Calabria, as

⁹⁵ *Ep.* 90; eds. Garzya, Roques, vol. 3, p. 211, 6–7. Trans. Fitzgerald, p. 177.

⁹⁶ For reviews of recent work on Gelasius see F.W. Bautz, *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* 2, s.v. Gelasius I (Hamm, 1990), pp. 197–199; R. Bratož, *EDP*, 1, s.v. Gelasio I, pp. 458–462. All translations of Gelasius' letters are our own.

⁹⁷ See Taylor, "The Early Papacy at Work", p. 317.

⁹⁸ Text in Thiel, pp. 449–450. Gelasius' letters are listed chronologically with summaries in Jaffé, pp. 83–95.

*Letter 37*⁹⁹ informs us: there not one but two bishops had been murdered, a situation to which Gelasius reacts irately, pointing out that even in the continual wars against barbarians bishops had never been killed by the sword. Leaving open the question whether the violence had been instigated by the people of Squillace or incited by outsiders, the pope instructs two bishops, presumably from neighbouring dioceses, that he is stripping the guilty church of its right to have its own bishop, and requests them to send a *visitorator* to restore the “divine ministries” there. *Letter 38*,¹⁰⁰ concerning the priest Celestine, who has been found guilty of being accessory to the murder of his bishop and relative, may refer to the violence reported in *Letter 36* and *Letter 37*.¹⁰¹ Celestine was forbidden communion for one year on the proviso that he performed appropriate penance, but his period of penance is now finished or nearly so and he can return to communion.

Violence of a lesser order is addressed by Gelasius in another letter.¹⁰² Here the pope instructs two bishops to protect from his adversaries a certain Mark, priest of a monastery on a (papal?) estate, who has made serious allegations against two of his fellow-priests, Romulus and Ticianus, to the effect that they threw him out of the church on Easter Day. Together with the lessee of the estate, Moderatus, the two miscreants then broke into the sanctuary of the church, and allowed Moderatus, a layman, to celebrate the mysteries while they pillaged the monastery. Gelasius asks the addressees of his letter to brief the bishop in charge of the monastery about what has gone on so that he can take appropriate action and save the good name of his establishment.

Unlawful and irregular ordinations much exercised Gelasius. While the ordination of a certain Stephen to the diaconate in a diocese other than his own elicited a reprimand from the pope to his bishop,¹⁰³ this was a breach of canon law rather than an abuse. The “abuse” lay in the bishop’s ordination of unsuitable persons to various clerical ranks, whether slaves, *originarii* (registered farm workers), or other *obnoxii* (obligated persons, bondsmen), without their owners’ permission.¹⁰⁴ “Hardly any bishop”, remarks Gelasius,

⁹⁹ Ed. Thiel, pp. 450–452 (Jaffé 725).

¹⁰⁰ Ed. Thiel, p. 452 (Jaffé 708, whose anterior dating of the letter excludes Celestine from being involved in the Squillace murders).

¹⁰¹ Suggested by Thiel, p. 452 n. 1.

¹⁰² Text in Löwenfeld, p. 2.

¹⁰³ *Ep.* 39 (Jaffé 714); ed. Ewald, p. 519.

¹⁰⁴ *Ep.* 20 (Jaffé 651); ed. Thiel, p. 386: ‘obnoxias coelestis militiae cingulo non praecingi’. Other infringements concerned ordained clerics who enlisted in the army, a desperate but

"can be regarded as beyond this [latter] accusation".¹⁰⁵ Next in the same letter the pope addresses a complaint brought before him by a *vir illustris* that some of the men obligated to him remain in the clerical state (the presbyterate), while others have recently been ordained deacons. Gelasius fulminates to Bishops Martyrius and Justus,¹⁰⁶ to whom he is writing:

You should not have accepted persons like this, not only after the recent rule, which it is agreed was carried out by the assembly of so many pontiffs with universal assent to its most beneficial provisions. And if, for example, they had previously been accepted into the cult of the divine army through ignorance, you should have got rid of them straightaway, and when you had stripped them of their religious privilege, forced them back into their owners' possession with a fair warning.¹⁰⁷

The pope demands that a slave or *obnoxius* unlawfully ordained to the priesthood should remain in his rank, but must surrender his *peculium* or property given by the owner; a deacon may continue in his role, or if he does not have a role should give himself up. The social sensibilities of the time are displayed by Gelasius' statement: "To the extent that this order is observed, neither the rights of the owners nor their privileges should be disturbed on any account".¹⁰⁸ To do so would have been, in his view, a social abuse.

Gelasius makes a similar decision about two slaves of Placidia, a *femina illustris*, who were ordained to clerical office in her absence.¹⁰⁹ The first of these two brothers, Antiochus, was ordained priest by Bishop Sabinus of Marcellianum or Consilinum in Lucania and because of this rank cannot be restored to his owner, although as an expedient Placidia may remove him to a church of his own but only for the celebration of the mysteries; the second brother, Leontius, being ordained apparently to a lower rank, is to be restored outright to his owner. Once again Gelasius stresses that he receives "frequent and consistent complaints" about such ecclesiastical abuse. In

sometimes necessary measure in times of war, which ran counter to ecclesiastical law. Decision 3 of Concilium Thelense, 24 Feb. 418, reads: 'Item si quis post remissionem peccatorum cingulum militiae saecularis habuerit, ad clerum admitti non debet.' (ed. Munier, CCL 149, p. 61, 63–64).

¹⁰⁵ *Ep.* 20; ed. Thiel, p. 387: 'ex hac culpa nullus pene episcoporum videatur extorris.'

¹⁰⁶ Two bishops so named were present at the first synod of Rome under Pope Symmachus in 499. According to Thiel, p. 386 n. 1, the former was bishop of Acheruntia (Apulia), the other perhaps of Tarracina (Campania).

¹⁰⁷ Ed. Thiel, p. 387.

¹⁰⁸ *Ep.* 20; ed. Thiel, p. 388: 'quatenus hoc ordine custodito nec dominorum jura nec privilegia ulla ratione turbentur.'

¹⁰⁹ *Ep.* 21 (Jaffé 653); ed. Thiel, p. 388.

the case of two *ordinarii*, property of the *illustris et magnificae* Maxima, who had been ordained deacons, he sternly orders “that the aberration in stepping out of line to this degree must be investigated more keenly than usual”, and, if the accusation is shown to be true, the two men are to be removed immediately from their ecclesiastical rank. In all these cases to do with ordination to the clergy, as Taylor has pointed out, Gelasius was careful to observe civil law, such as a Novel of Valentinian III forbidding clerical rank to those under obligation.¹¹⁰

Embezzlement by the clergy was taken seriously and carefully followed up by Gelasius. In *Letter 7*¹¹¹ he orders Bishop Geruntius of Valva, near Salerno,¹¹² to investigate the allegation that the bishop of Potentia in Apulia removed a sacred paten and turned it to his own use. Had it not been for the length of the journey and for bad weather, the pope would have gone to Potentia himself (a distance of c. 250 km), so seriously did he regard this charge, which he says “must be investigated by every means of enquiry”. In his place the pope sends the *defensor ecclesiae Romanae* and places Geruntius’ cleric under his protection so that he does not suffer at the hands of the impeached bishop. In another case the archdeacon John complained that the local bishop of Falerio in Picenum Suburbicarium was embezzling for his own use that part of the income of the church ear-marked for church fabric and liturgy, as well as funds from elsewhere designated for upkeep of the clergy.¹¹³ When John and many others objected to this abuse of funds they were dismissed from their offices. Gelasius asks for a careful report to be brought to him (‘nostris auribus’) so that he can decide the case. A fragment from another of the pope’s letters outlines the case of the deacon Olympius, who was appointed guardian of two children whose parents had died. He proceeded to embezzle what little inheritance the children had, inciting Gelasius to denounce his conduct as “against religion and abominable” and “going beyond robbery”.¹¹⁴ Similar indignation concerning the possible abuse of vulnerable minors can be read in another fragment from a letter addressed to a certain Anastasius, a cleric of indeterminate rank, to whom the pope points out that it is the duty of the pontiff to intervene to protect the orphans Maximus and Januarius, because this has been ordered by God.

¹¹⁰ Taylor, “The Early Papacy at Work”, p. 324. The Novel in question is 35.3; *CTh*, vol. 3, pp. 143–144.

¹¹¹ Ed. Löwenfeld, p. 4 (Jaffé 648).

¹¹² For the location see Ewald, p. 513 n. 1.

¹¹³ *Frag.* 22 (Jaffé 687); ed. Thiel, p. 496. Cf. Taylor, “The Early Papacy at Work”, pp. 323–324.

¹¹⁴ *Frag.* 33 (Jaffé 734); ed. Thiel, p. 501. Cf. Ewald, *Frag.* 57, p. 524.

Anastasius is to come to the children's aid to keep them safe from possible abuse by their enemies. Taylor suggests that Anastasius was one of the unofficial *orphanotrophoi* mentioned in legal codes as legal guardians who were under no obligation to render accounts,¹¹⁵ a situation that was open to abuse, as the civil laws dealing with them testify.¹¹⁶

In addition to denouncing unlawful ordinations and embezzlement by clergy, Gelasius regarded problems with wills and heirs as part of his portfolio. In *Letters* 23 and 24¹¹⁷ it is a case of two clerics, Silvester and Faustinian, who have requested that their status as freemen be examined by Bishops Crispinus and Sabinus according to ecclesiastical and civil law. In the first letter the appellants claim that, whereas they were manumitted by their owner and thus enabled to join the clergy at an early age, on his death his heirs wanted to overturn the manumission and reclaim their property, whereby Silvester and Faustinian, as slaves once more, would no longer be able to function as clerics. In addition to their treatment by the heirs, the pair were also harassed by the local archdeacon, who wanted to take the law into his own hands. Gelasius appeals to both ecclesiastical and civil law, warning that the "laws of the church which the princes [emperors] of old have supported by their continual ordinances" not be denied to clerics who have been attacked. So seriously did Gelasius take the situation of the manumitted clerics that he wrote the second letter on their behalf to the Gothic count (*zeja*),¹¹⁸ asking him to pursue the case and flattering him into taking action. Here Gelasius maintains that the pair were summoned against the laws of the state by the archdeacon mentioned in the previous letter: again Gelasius sides with the civil laws and urges their enactment, advising the count that the appellants "should be defended by the protection of Your Sublimity, so that neither any theft nor violent force contrary to the [civil] laws be inflicted on them". Gelasius' minute interest in curbing abuses relating to wills is further exemplified by two fragmentary texts: part of a letter addressed to Bishop Victor in the region of Beneventum advises him that "the heirs wish to respect and carry out the intent of the will",¹¹⁹ and another

¹¹⁵ Taylor, "The Early Papacy at Work", p. 327.

¹¹⁶ On the laws of Emperors Leo and Justinian with regard to clerical *tutores*, *orphanotrophoi* see *CTh* 3.17.1, 3.30.1–2; cf. Thiel, p. 501 n. 2.

¹¹⁷ Ed. Thiel, pp. 389–390 and 390–391, respectively (Jaffé 727, 728).

¹¹⁸ Taylor, "The Early Papacy at Work", p. 328, suggests that *zaja* or *zeia* was the Gothic equivalent of *comes*. The *zaja* is mentioned also in *Ep.* 14 (Jaffé 650); ed. Ewald, pp. 513–514, in the context of correcting another kind of abuse.

¹¹⁹ *Frag.* 20 (Jaffé 656); ed. Ewald, p. 516. On the location of Victor's see cf. Ewald, p. 512 n. 3.

text of barely two lines warns that it is in the best interests of the church to safeguard the intention of the testator.¹²⁰

Several texts, albeit fragmentary, attest to the practice of fleeing abusive situations and claiming sanctuary in a church or holy place,¹²¹ resorted to by a number of different classes in Gelasius' time: a runaway slave,¹²² a man seemingly an *originarius*, a Christian slave of a Jew,¹²³ and a *curialis*.¹²⁴ It is the last case that will concern us here, being one of the violation of the right of asylum. The *curialis* had sought refuge in the sanctuary of a church in Beneventum when, during the absence of the priest, two of his fellow-citizens broke in and used violence to drag him out. Gelasius stresses that no law of the state had ever permitted such behaviour,¹²⁵ and warns that if the two men are proven guilty of having violated the rules of asylum, they should be excommunicated; he will put his full authority behind such a decision. Furthermore, he will use his authority to keep them out of all the churches in Beneventum as a fitting punishment and a deterrent to others.

Gelasius' avid interest in micro-managing the papal estates¹²⁶ transferred easily into keeping an eye on the property and money of others, with the aim of preventing abuse. It is clear that he was asked to intervene on behalf of those who considered themselves defrauded, such as the monastic woman Olibula:

The devout woman Olibula has advised us in a sad request that she has been stripped of her possessions by her sisters, who, with no regard for her solitary life, divided up their parents' estate solely among themselves, supported by the help of their husbands.¹²⁷

The addressee of this letter, John of Spoleto, probably a bishop because he is addressed as *frater carissime*, is told to protect Olibula from her sisters and brothers-in-law and recover her rightful portion of the inheritance so

¹²⁰ *Frag.* 29 (Jaffé 731); ed. Thiel, p. 500.

¹²¹ On Christian asylum or sanctuary, a practice adopted from Classical times, transferred from pagan temples to Christian churches, monasteries and shrines, see Chapter 3 above. On the pre-Christian development of the practice see K.J. Rigsby, *Asylia. Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (Berkeley, 1996).

¹²² *Frag.* 41 (Jaffé 711); ed. Thiel, pp. 505–506.

¹²³ *Frag.* 42 (Jaffé 732); ed. Thiel, p. 506.

¹²⁴ *Frag.* 40 (Jaffé 737); ed. Thiel, pp. 504–505.

¹²⁵ He was probably thinking of *CTh* 9.45 and *Sirm. Cons.* 13 on the rights of those seeking asylum in a church.

¹²⁶ As exemplified in *Ep.* 17 (Jaffé 637); ed. Thiel, pp. 381–382, *Ep.* 31 (Jaffé 666); Thiel, pp. 447–448, *Ep.* 32 (Jaffé 667); ed. Thiel, p. 448.

¹²⁷ *Ep.* 40 (Jaffé 690); ed. Thiel, pp. 453–454.

that “she may serve God with a calm mind”.¹²⁸ In another case, reported in a fragment, the pope stipulates that a disputed property not be transferred until it is established legally to whom it really belongs, and that in the meantime no rent should be paid from it.¹²⁹ While it is sometimes difficult to reconstruct the context of fragmentary letters dealing with abuse and its avoidance, we have one complete text¹³⁰ that outlines a particularly unsavoury episode involving a dispute between Faustus, the *defensor ecclesiae Romanae*, and a certain Eucharistus, who had set his sights on becoming bishop of Volterra by offering the *defensor* sixty-three *solidi* as a “bond” (*cautione*). When Eucharistus’ attempt at the episcopate failed (supposedly because of his history of heinous crimes) and Faustus refused to return the “bond”, the matter was referred to Gelasius, not, as we might have expected, because of the initial bribery—the pope tells us that in fact the transaction was made in his presence and that of many *curiales* of Volterra—but because Eucharistus wanted to reclaim his money, most of which Faustus maintained he had spent on the upkeep of the *curiales* and on fodder for their animals. Gelasius rules that Faustus not be obliged to return the balance and that Eucharistus’ claim is null and void. The notoriety of this dispute is demonstrated by the fact that Gelasius’ letter, which is really a report, was read out formally in a synod.¹³¹

While abuse by clerics takes various forms in Gelasius’ letters, a tantalizingly short fragment concerning a certain Paul the deacon covers two kinds of abuse that the pope sought to stamp out.¹³² It has come to Gelasius’ attention that Paul showed an honest woman (‘*honesta femina*’) a good time (‘*tempus bonum*’), in the course of which he prevailed on her to commit criminal acts and involved her in the magic art of cursing. The pope instructs the addressee of the letter to ascertain whether in fact Paul had lusted after the woman, and then to have him corroborate her story or submit to correction.

As we stated at the beginning of this case-study on abuse in the letters of Gelasius I, in his surviving correspondence we have on the one hand concrete examples of various types of abuse, and on the other his 28 decretals, transmitted in *Letter 14*,¹³³ some of which are directed against prevailing or

¹²⁸ *Ep.* 40 (Jaffé 690); ed. Thiel, pp. 453–454.

¹²⁹ *Frag.* 46 (Jaffé 712); ed. Thiel, p. 508.

¹³⁰ *Ep.* 22 (Jaffé 720); ed. Löwenfeld, pp. 11–12.

¹³¹ See ed. Löwenfeld, p. 11: ‘Gelasius in synodo dixit’.

¹³² *Frag.* 16 (Jaffé 713); ed. Thiel, p. 492.

¹³³ (Jaffé 636); ed. Thiel, pp. 360–379.

foreseen ecclesiastical abuses. The importance of these decretals is demonstrated by their inclusion in the *Collectio Dionysiana*, a compilation of 173 decretals or excerpts of 38 letters from various bishops of Rome from 385 to 498 put together by Gelasius' contemporary, the Scythian monk Dionysius Exiguus, by which they were transmitted to the Middle Ages.¹³⁴

Leaving aside decretals of a canonical nature, such as those stipulating the proper season for baptism, ordination and the consecration of virgins, as well as those pertaining to the proper conduct of deacons and priests, we find penalties for some of the factual abuses discussed above. Thus to corroborate the pope's ruling on the ordination of slaves and *originarii* in the letters treated above, decretal 14 stipulates that "no leader [bishop] should protect either the slave or *originarius* of a church or monastery in the name of religion if the owners are unwilling; whoever has tried to do this will put at risk his position and his communion."¹³⁵ Decretal 24, which condemns both the giver and recipient of bribes in acquiring clerical office, does not, however, seem to have influenced Gelasius' verdict on Faustus and Eucharistus, as reported in *Letter 24* (Löwenfeld). The misdemeanours of clerics like the deacon Paul are legislated for in decretal 19: "it is not permitted to conduct the sacred services by means of demonic or other unrestrained phenomena."¹³⁶ Other forms of abuse enshrined in *Letter 14* concern exacting payment for baptism and confirmation (5), those who fornicate with dedicated virgins (20), and women who presume "to act as ministers at the sacred altars, or to take on themselves any of those duties allotted to men" (26).¹³⁷

¹³⁴ See further B. Neil, "The Decretals of Gelasius I: Making Canon Law in Late Antiquity", in *Lex et religio in età tardoantica, XL Incontro de Studiosi dell'Antichità Cristiana* (Roma, 10–12 maggio 2012), *Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum*, 135 (Rome, forthcoming).

¹³⁵ Ed. Thiel, p. 360, and pp. 370–371.

¹³⁶ Ed. Thiel, p. 361, and pp. 372–373.

¹³⁷ Ed. Thiel, p. 361, and pp. 376–378.

CHAPTER SEVEN

BREAKDOWN IN THE STRUCTURES OF DEPENDENCE

INTRODUCTION

Letters to patrons, whether to men or women, were performative in the sense that they actively maintained ties of obligation or other bonds. Thus they offer a window onto the structures of dependence that remained in the fifth and sixth centuries. The crisis in the structures of dependence from the fourth to the sixth centuries has recently become the focus of great scholarly attention, partially inspired by Brown's *Poverty and Leadership*. Brown followed the theory of Patlagean that a shift from a civic model of social relations to an economic model of social relations occurred in this period, whereby the poor became "visible" to the rich as deserving of help.¹ Our own findings in *Preaching Poverty* revealed a major problem with applying this theory to the fourth and early to mid-fifth centuries:² namely, that the social obligations between givers and receivers that underpinned the economic model—and Brown's positing of the adoption of a biblical "language of claims" of the poor on the rich—did not and could not exist without the sort of judicial system that framed Hebrew Scriptures (especially Psalms), in which the poor were recognized as a body with rights to protection. The Judaic judicial framework was weakened to the point of obliteration by the strong resistance of the Graeco-Roman models of both personal and public patronage. This was evident from the gap between rhetoric and praxis in the philanthropic activities of bishops of the fourth and first half of the fifth centuries (especially John Chrysostom, Augustine and Leo I of Rome), as well as from the evergetism practised by elite ascetics. While the Jewish model of almsgiving rested upon a precept of equal human dignity between rich and poor, the Christianization of the personal patronage model was ruthlessly

¹ E. Patlagean, *Pauvreté économique et pauvreté sociale à Byzance 4e–7e siècles*, *Civilisations et Sociétés* 48 (Paris, 1977).

² *Contra* Brown, *Poverty and Leadership*; M.J. De Vinne, "The Advocacy of Empty Bellies: Episcopal Representation of the Poor in the Late Empire", D.Phil. diss., Stanford University, 1995; S. Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome*, VC Supplements 93 (Leiden, 2009).

hierarchical. Over the vertical relationship between the worldly patron and client, it introduced a third agent, God, the ultimate patron, who constituted the highest level of the social/spiritual hierarchy and to whom the debt of the sinner could never be repaid. Late-antique Christian charity in fact had four agents: the giver, the passive receiver, God, and the conduit/steward (bishop or ascetic) who mediated wealth, goods and services. All took turns to play the roles of creditor and debtor, giver and receiver.³

From the late fifth through the sixth centuries, these traditional social structures were breaking down. The increasing aristocratization of the episcopate over the course of our two centuries of interest has been noted in the literature on Gallic and Roman bishops.⁴ The same trend can be observed in the East, where former consuls or *curiales* were often fast-tracked to the episcopate.

While there are several lengthy treatise-letters which are wholly or partly concerned with the value of poverty, such as Salvian of Marseille's *Ad ecclesiam sive adversus avaritiam*, the anonymous *Epistula de vera humilitate ad Demetriadem* and the Pelagian tract *Ad Celantiam*,⁵ these tend to focus on spiritual or voluntary poverty adopted by elite ascetics. Bishops' letters contain few pleas on behalf of the poor in general. Exceptions are Gelasius I's appeal to Theodoric's mother, Hereleuva, for assistance with poor relief, and his expression of thanks to a noblewoman who had returned estates (*praedia*) that had been stolen from the Roman church—whether by Ostrogoths or by Romans—for the feeding of the poor.⁶ Several other examples from Pelagius I will be treated below. Most bishops' letters on this subject concern the formerly wealthy who have been impoverished by circumstances, as we saw in the letters of recommendation written by Theodoret of Cyrrhus on behalf of displaced persons.⁷ Wealth, nobility and connections seem to have played an important part in the success of individual petitions for aid. Supporting evidence for this bias in Rome and Ravenna comes from the

³ See B. Neil, "Models of Gift Giving in the Preaching of Leo the Great", *J ECS* 18/2 (2010), pp. 225–258.

⁴ See Richards, *Popes and the Papacy*, pp. 240–242. On aristocratic status as a pre-requisite for papal election by the time of Gregory I, see also J. Moorhead, "On Becoming Pope in Late Antiquity", *Journal of Religious History* 30.3 (2006), pp. 279–293.

⁵ Salvian of Marseille, *Ad ecclesiam sive adversus avaritiam* (CPL 487), SC 176, pp. 138–344; *Ad Celantiam* (CPL 745); ed. I. Hilberg, CSEL 29, pp. 329–356; trans. Rees, *Pelagius. Life and Letters*, pp. 127–144.

⁶ *Frag.* 36; ed. Thiel, p. 502; *Frag.* 35 to *illustris* Firmina; *ibid.*, pp. 501–502.

⁷ Case-study 4 in Chapter 3 above.

Libri Pontificales of each capital.⁸ As shown by Rapp, the late-antique bishop assumed a more important role in civic affairs in the two centuries after Constantine the Great, which included acts of public evergetism.⁹ While the evidence for this is most obvious in Rome from the second half of the fifth century, when the imperial focus moved away from Rome towards Ravenna, definitively with the arrival of the Ostrogoths, it is a trend that took place at various increments all over the empire. While we would not want to posit a total imperial power vacuum, even in Rome, the evidence for episcopal involvement in the provision of buildings, churches, housing; ransoming of prisoners; emergency food supplies; and diplomatic exchanges with potential invaders, grows significantly from the mid-fifth century.¹⁰

At the end of the fifth century, titular or “neighbourhood” churches (*tituli*) in Rome passed from private ownership into the hands of the bishop.¹¹ This development put bishops of Rome in a stronger position to manage their extensive properties and their revenues, as well as to defend the interests of the needy and especially the clergy, who were considered a special category of “the poor”. At the same time Pope Gelasius started to insist that wealthy landowners apply in writing for episcopal approval to establish private foundations and staff them with clergy.¹² The extension of papal power over monasteries and other charitable institutions is evidenced in Pelagius I’s correspondence, from 556 to 561. In the sixth century socio-economic conditions had worsened in Italy, as first the Gothic wars of 535 to 554, and

⁸ See B. Neil, “Crisis and Wealth in Byzantine Italy: the *Libri Pontificales* of Rome and Ravenna”, *Byzantion* 82 (2012), pp. 279–303.

⁹ Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity*, esp. pp. 274–289, where an overview of the legal evidence is given.

¹⁰ M. Humphries, “From Emperor to Pope? Ceremonial, Space, and Authority at Rome From Constantine to Gregory the Great”, in eds. Cooper, Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage*, pp. 21–58, highlights the occasional imperial presence in Rome throughout the sixth and seventh centuries. See the discussion of the fifth-century Roman evidence in B. Neil, ‘Imperial Benefactions to the Fifth-Century Roman Church’, in eds G. Nathan, L. Garland, Basileia: *Essays on Imperium and Culture in honour of E.M. and M.J. Jeffreys*, Byzantina Australiensia 17 (Brisbane, 2011), pp. 55–66, with lit..

¹¹ On the *tituli*, post-Constantinian foundations in Rome that numbered 29 by the end of the fifth century, see Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority*, pp. 231–232; J. Hillner, “Families, Patronage and the Titular Churches of Rome, c. 300–c. 600”, in eds. Cooper, Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage*, pp. 225–261.

¹² The increased oversight of private estate churches by Roman bishops from the end of the fifth century is noted by Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority*, pp. 166–172; see also K. Cooper, “Poverty, Obligation, and Inheritance: Roman Heiresses and the Varieties of Senatorial Christianity in Fifth-Century Rome”, in eds. Cooper, Hillner, *Religion, Dynasty*, pp. 165–189 at pp. 173–174.

later the Lombard invasions from the 570s, left many dioceses unable to provide for the basic needs of their clergy or other needy in their district. Out of dire necessity Pelagius I was forced to take an interest in the poor and to watch closely the management of his own estates and of private foundations. It has been plausibly suggested that the tightening of episcopal control over such appointments was a response to the breakdown of the old system of senatorial management of rural estates, as a result of the Gothic wars.¹³ Pelagius I instructed the *defensor* Opilio to establish a presbyter or deacon as abbot of the monastery and hospital of St John at Catana, and to forbid the monks all power of ordaining or deposing.¹⁴ Another dispute concerned a woman who had built and dedicated an oratory and established monks there, of whom one was a priest.¹⁵ Later Pelagius II (579–590) converted his own house into an almshouse for the aged poor.¹⁶

FAILURE OF THE ROMAN LEGAL SYSTEM

In Christian antiquity the civil legal system was overloaded with litigation, leaving most plaintiffs without the time or the resources to achieve justice in the secular system. The system of allowing bishops to arbitrate cases brought before them by two parties without coercion, which was introduced by Constantine I in 318 as a means of reducing the backlog of cases that came to arbitration, presented a valid alternative. By the fifth century, however, the bishop's court (*audientia episcopalis*) was itself overloaded. That the *audientia episcopalis* demanded an enormous commitment of the bishop's time is evident in particular from Augustine's letters.¹⁷ Although the process of hearing cases according to civil law formed such a large part of a bishop's duties, we are still reasonably in the dark about the kinds of cases brought before him.¹⁸ We know too that bishops were often powerless in the face of

¹³ L. Pietri, "Évergétisme chrétien et fondations privées dans l'Italie de l'antiquité tardive", in eds. R. Lizzi Testa, J.-M. Carrié, *Humana Sapit: études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini* (Turnhout, 2002), pp. 253–263 at p. 262; Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority*, p. 122.

¹⁴ *Ep.* 42 to Opilio (Jaffé 1001); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 116–118 (mid-March 559). This is to be done in the presence of the newly elected bishop of Catana, Elpidius.

¹⁵ *Ep.* 44 to John *defensor* (Jaffé 1003; 960); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 121–124 (mid-March–c. 22 March 559).

¹⁶ *LP* 1, p. 309.

¹⁷ *Ep.* 9* (NBA 23A, pp. 72–77); *Ep.* 11* (NBA 23A, pp. 88–117); *Ep.* 20*.6–7 (NBA 23A, pp. 164–167); *Ep.* 24*.1 (NBA 23A, pp. 212–213).

¹⁸ For secondary literature on the bishop's court in the fourth to sixth centuries see

the injustices that came before them.¹⁹ So, was the judicial system reformed from the latter half of the fifth century to reflect the interests of the poor, and other victims of the various crises discussed in Chapters Three to Six? In the next section and the two case-studies on Augustine and Pelagius I, we consider the epistolary evidence for the workings of the bishop's court and its complex relationship with the civil legal system.

THE BISHOP'S COURT

Augustine's *Letter 24** is one of the most important witnesses to a breakdown in North African society in Late Antiquity. It also demonstrates the kinds of problems bishops faced in reconciling the tenets of Christianity with the dictates of civil law. Here Augustine asks advice from the lawyer Eustochius to help him in adjudicating cases in the *audientia episcopalis*.²⁰ In particular it is a question of free parents leasing their children to the

in chronological order: W. Selb, "Episcopalis audientia von der Zeit Konstantins bis Novelle XXXV Valentinians III", *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 84 (1967), pp. 162–217; C. Lepelley, "Liberté, colonat et esclavage d'après la lettre 24*", in *Les Lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 329–342, at pp. 340–342; M.R. Cimma, *L'Episcopalis audientia nelle costituzioni imperiali da Costantino a Giustiniano* (Turin, 1989); J. Lamoreaux, "Episcopal Courts in Late Antiquity", *J ECS* 3 (1995), pp. 143–167; K. Raikas, "Audientia Episcopalis: Problematik zwischen Staat und Kirche bei Augustin", *Augustinianum* 37 (1997), pp. 476–477; P. Garnsey, C. Humfress, *Evolution of the Late Antique World* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 72–77; L. Dossey, "Judicial Violence and the Ecclesiastical Courts in Late Antique North Africa", in ed. R.W. Mathisen, *Law, Society and Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 98–114; J. Harries, "Resolving Disputes: The Frontiers of Law in Late Antiquity", in ed. Mathisen, *Law, Society and Authority*, pp. 68–82; N. Lenski, "Evidence for the *audientia episcopalis* in the New Letters of Augustine", in ed. Mathisen, *Law, Society and Authority*, pp. 83–97; P.I. Kaufman, "Patience and/or Politics: Augustine and the Crisis at Calama, 408–409", *VC* 57/1 (2003), pp. 23–35 at p. 32; K. Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice in the Age of Augustine* (Philadelphia, 2007), pp. 29–43; J. Hellebrand, ed., *Augustinus als Richter*, Cassiciacum 39/5, *Res et Signa Augustinus-Studien* 5 (Würzburg, 2009); K. Cooper, "Christianity, Private Power and the Law from Decius to Constantine: A Minimalist View", *J ECS* 19/3 (2011), pp. 329–343; J. Harries, "Superfluous Verbiage? Rhetoric and Law in the Age of Constantine and Julian", *J ECS* 19/3 (2011), pp. 345–374; C. Humfress, "Bishops and Law Courts in Late Antiquity: How (Not) to Make Sense of the Legal Evidence", *J ECS* 19/3 (2011), pp. 375–400, with a comprehensive bibliography at p. 376 n. 5.

¹⁹ See C. Lepelley, "Facing Wealth and Poverty: Defining Augustine's Social Doctrine", *The Saint Augustine Lecture 2006*, *Augustinian Studies* 38 (2007), pp. 1–17 at p. 17; Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice*, pp. 38–43; Allen, Neil, and Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, pp. 149, and 225–226.

²⁰ NBA 23A, pp. 212–215; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 323–324. See M. Humbert, "Enfants à louer ou à vendre: Augustin et l'autorité parentale", pp. 189–204 in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*; C. Lepelley, "Liberté, colonat et esclavage", pp. 329–342, *ibid.*; Mayer, "Legitimation", pp. 70–74; Raikas, "Audientia episcopalis", pp. 98–100.

labour force for up to twenty-five years, or sometimes even selling them into slavery, a process which Eno describes as a “proto-serfdom of the type we usually associate with the Middle Ages”.²¹ Referring to 1 Corinthians 6:6, where Paul stipulates that cases between Christians be heard in the church not in the courts, Augustine complains: “... we have to endure the sort of petitions on the part of litigants in which we have to learn the laws of this world, especially concerning the temporal condition of persons”.²² Raikas points to the legal ambiguity here caused by the old jurisprudential tradition of the Roman empire *vis-à-vis* the application of imperial constitutions, and posits a changing model whereby the process of the *audientia episcopalis*, in which the bishop exercised in a pastoral way the role of father over children, contributed to restrictions in private law.²³

The corruption that was endemic throughout the empire and caused abuses of the just was also alleged to be present in the *audientia episcopalis*. As Noel Lenski aptly put it, “When a bishop wished, he could enthusiastically abuse his legal powers.”²⁴ Augustine gives an example of the reactions of the litigants when a bishop decides in favour of a rich person or a poor one—in both cases allegations of bribery are flung at the bishop.²⁵ We will return to Augustine in our first case-study below.

Theodoret, bishop of the wealthy Syrian city of Cyrrhus (423–466), intercedes in several letters on behalf of poor peasants in his jurisdiction in a way that seems truly exceptional for a bishop of the mid-fifth century. As we saw in our case-study on Theodoret in relation to displaced persons,²⁶ Theodoret’s strong civic sense married well with his conception of a bishop’s responsibility for looking after the material needs of his flock. In a letter to the *magister militum* Areobindus Theodoret intervenes on behalf of peasants whose crops have failed for two years, asking that they not be required to pay taxes.²⁷ In another letter he asks the *archon* Neon for the same consideration.²⁸ In 446 to 447 the bishop wrote four letters on behalf of the poor.

²¹ R.B. Eno, *Saint Augustine. Letters Volume VI* (1*–29*), FOTC 81 (Washington, DC, 1989), p. 172.

²² *Ep.* 24*1; NBA 23A, p. 213; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, p. 323: ‘... nos necesse est perpeti tales iurgantium quaestiones, in quibus nobis etiam sub terrena iura quaerenda sint, praecipue de condicione hominum temporali.’

²³ Raikas, ‘Audientia episcopalis’, pp. 98–100.

²⁴ Lenski, “Evidence for the *audientia episcopalis*”, p. 97.

²⁵ Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* 25/2,13; NBA 25, pp. 348–350.

²⁶ Chapter 3, Case-study 5.

²⁷ *Ep.* 18; ed. Azéma, vol. 1, pp. 89–90 (possibly before 434).

²⁸ *Ep.* 37 to the archon Neon; ed. Azéma, vol. 1, p. 102 (c. 434).

The first two concern peasants who are at the mercy of another bishop and cannot pay their taxes.²⁹ In these letters he complains to the prefect and the empress that the peasants have been wronged by the bishop and many have deserted the land. This was not an isolated incident. In *Letter 45* to *patricius* Anatolius he complains about another bishop's oppression of the poor in the district of Cyrrhus and Cilicia, asking him to intervene,³⁰ and he intercedes with Proclus, patriarch of Constantinople, once more on behalf of the poor.³¹ Theodoret may have considered this as compatible with the philanthropic duties of a *curialis*, along with the building of aqueducts and other public buildings for the city of Cyrrhus. However, we must stress that this evidence, which seems to support Brown's argument in *Poverty and Leadership*, is exceptional in every way. The more common impression is that bishops were very little involved in the needs of the poor and oppressed in the fourth century, and only marginally more so in the fifth and sixth centuries, and then their interventions were overwhelmingly in favour of the formerly wealthy. Even Augustine's many letters provide us with only a handful of instances where he intervened on behalf of the poor and oppressed.³²

The role of mediation outside the legal system became increasingly important as the secular system was seen to take too long, cost too much and be too unpredictable in its results due to corrupt officers.³³ Provincial governors sometimes took the initiative and set up a free alternative to the *audientia episcopalis* or the secular courts. The Syriac *Chronicle* of Ps. Joshua the Stylite, an anonymous work composed in the city of Edessa between 494 and 506, relates one such instance in 497 CE.³⁴

²⁹ *Ep. 42* to the prefect Constantine; ed. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 106–113, and *Ep. 43* to Pulcheria augusta; ed. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 112–115.

³⁰ *Ep. 45* to *patricius*; ed. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 118–121.

³¹ *Ep. 47* to Proclus, bishop of Constantinople; ed. Azéma, vol. 2, pp. 122–125.

³² C. Lepelley, "Le patronat épiscopal aux IV^e et V^e siècles", in eds. Rebillard, Sotinel, *L'évêque dans la cité*, pp. 17–33, at pp. 31–32; Allen, Neil, Mayer, *Preaching Poverty*, p. 149. Augustine's glancing references to helping the poor in his commentary on Psalms were also heavily weighted towards spiritual, not actual, poverty: see P. Allen, B. Neil, "The Poor in Psalms: Augustine's Discourse on Poverty in *Enarrationes in Psalmos*", in eds. C. Harrison, A. Casiday, A. Andreopoulos, *Meditations of the Heart. Essays in Honour of Andrew Louth*, Studia Theologiae Traditionis (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 181–204.

³³ On mediation see J. Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 172: "Settling a dispute by mediation by a third party or by negotiation between the parties themselves was, by definition, extra-legal ... This did not, in practice, mean that informal agreements were less binding." Cf. Gelasius, *ep. 1*, ed. Thiel, pp. 287–311, where Acacius is said repeatedly to be "in mediation".

³⁴ *Chronicle*, 29; ed. Chabot, CSCO 91, pp. 255–256; trans. Trombley, Watt, pp. 26–27.

Alexander replaced [Anastasius as governor] at the end of this year. ... He also put a wooden box in front of his *praitorion* and made a hole in its lid, and wrote above it that anyone wishing to make something known, which he could not (do) easily in public, should put it in writing and drop it inside (the box) without fear. On this account he learnt many things, for many people wrote (notes) and put them in it. Every Friday without fail he would sit in the *martyrion* of Mar John the Baptist and Mar Addai the Apostle and settle lawsuits free of charge. [The oppressed] stood up against their oppressors, the swindled against their swindlers; they brought their cases before him, and he gave judgement.

It is unclear whether this was an old north-Syrian custom of *gratis* mediation,³⁵ or a reaction to the failure of the episcopal and civil court systems. Alexander judged uninvestigated cases that went back more than fifty years,³⁶ thus outdoing the thirty-year statute of limitations in Roman law, repeated in a *novella* promulgated by Valentinian III and in Canon 17 of the Council of Chalcedon.³⁷

One reason that many were obliged seek justice from episcopal courts was that they were excluded from secular courts by their clerical profession.³⁸ Leo I's *Letter* 137 concerns charges of corruption against church stewards, or financial administrators (*oeconomici*).³⁹ Such stewards had control over the financial affairs of a diocese, under the bishop's supervision. Leo requested of Emperor Marcian that the financial accounts of church stewards should be audited by clergy, not by laypersons, that is, that they should be tried in ecclesiastical courts.⁴⁰ Clergy were meant to bring their case before their own bishop.⁴¹ Gelasius made a similar plea to Theodoric in regard to two renegade priests who had sought to have their case heard by the royal court. An important limitation on the capacity for litigants to succeed in an episcopal hearing was the criterion that both parties do so without coercion, as stipulated in a *novella* of Valentinian III.⁴²

³⁵ A possibility suggested by Trombley, Watt, p. 27, n. 134.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *CTh.* 4.14, pp. 194–196; Canon 17 of Chalcedon; Valentinian III's *novella* 27, trans. Pharr, pp. 538–539; cf. *Nov. Val.* 31 and 35.

³⁸ *Sirm. Cons.* 6; trans. Pharr, p. 479.

³⁹ ACO 2.4, pp. 89–90, nr. 80. Trans. Neil, *Leo the Great*, pp. 136–138.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Sirm. Cons.* 3, trans. Pharr, p. 478: clerics shall not be called before a public court in ecclesiastical cases.

⁴¹ Canon 9 of Chalcedon "Against clerics going to a secular court; they are to bring their case before their own bishop"; ed., trans. Tanner, p. 91 and p. 91*, with pre-history on p. 91* n. 1.

⁴² *Nov. Val.* 35; Pharr, p. 545: episcopal courts; bishops can judge cases between clerics or where both parties are willing but not otherwise; "since bishops do not have a court according

In Rome it was common practice for the bishop to delegate judicial duties to other bishops to judge a law suit between clergy. For example, Gelasius appoints three bishops as judges between the archdeacon Faustinus and deacon Stephen, with the caustic remark: "We think it pointless to call litigants to our see when the causes of souls and the sole purpose of the *petitor* is words!"⁴³ This is not to say that Roman bishops were heavily involved in face-to-face mediation. Taylor's study of the letters of Gelasius concluded that, "the proceedings of Gelasius' tribunal were for the most part conducted by documents".⁴⁴ On at least three occasions Pope Gelasius protested successfully to Theodoric against those who had gone to the royal courts unlawfully while concealing their status as clerics.⁴⁵ In a tantalizingly brief fragment, he points out to Theodoric that, since the king has ordained that the laws of Roman princes should govern human affairs, he should want them to do so all the more in reverence to blessed Peter.⁴⁶ Those who were in a state of penance were also discouraged from litigating in secular courts.⁴⁷

Evidence for the *audientia episcopalis* as practised by individual bishops is sketchy at best. Two of our best examples come from Augustine of Hippo and Pelagius of Rome, the subjects of case-studies at the end of this chapter. No eastern bishops provide enough material to warrant a case-study.

CONCLUSION

The general crisis in the structures of dependence obscures the reality of episcopal responses to poverty and social displacement in the period under scrutiny. While it is true that more letters emerge in which the bishop seems to take an interest in the poor, this interest is *ad hoc*, *ad locum*, and *ad*

to the laws, and they cannot have cognizance of cases except in religious matters, according to the divine imperial constitutions of Arcadius and Honorius" (*CTh* 16.11.1; 1.27.2; *CJ* 1.4.7).

⁴³ *Ep.* 6 to Bishops Victor, Serenus and Melior; ed. Löwenfeld, pp. 3–4 (end of 494 or the beg. 495).

⁴⁴ Taylor, "The Early Papacy at Work", p. 321.

⁴⁵ *Frag.* 11 (Jaffé 723); ed. Thiel, p. 489; *Frag.* 13 (Jaffé 743); ed. Thiel, p. 490, and *Ep.* 46 (Jaffé 721); ed. Ewald, pp. 521–522. Cf. Taylor, "The Early Papacy at Work", p. 322 n. 40.

⁴⁶ *Frag.* 12; ed. Thiel, pp. 489–490: 'Certum est, magnificentiam vestram leges Romanorum principum, quas in negotiis hominum custodiendas esse praecepit, multo magis circa reverentiam beati Petri apostoli pro suae felicitatis augmento velle servari.'

⁴⁷ *Ep.* 167 to Rusticus of Narbonne; PL 54, 1199–1209; trans. Neil, *Leo the Great*, p. 144. Question 10 concerned those who have professed penance, and then start pursuing a case in the law courts. Leo rules that "it is better to seek a ruling from the church than from a court of law".

hominem. Letters of personal recommendation begin to appear more frequently from bishops' pens, but those who were recommended were almost always relatively wealthy, at least until their circumstances were changed by war and displacement. The *audientia episcopalis*, while it offered a better chance of justice for the ordinary person without connections, and was the only avenue open to clergy and penitents, was over-taxed and open to corruption, to judge from the examples of Pelagius, Gelasius and Theodoret. In the uncertainty created by the breakdown in civic structures, bishops took the opportunity to extend their control over private foundations, some monasteries⁴⁸ and, in Rome, titular churches. Imperial administrative structures held on to some extent, longer in some regions than others. Regrettably, no broad-sweeping ideological transformation of the kind posited by Patlagean and Brown is evidenced in episcopal letters from 410 to 590 CE.

In the concluding chapter, we consider how episcopal strategies for managing the crises treated in Chapters 3 to 7 differed across time and place, and what common threads run through epistolary evidence on the subject, giving us an overall picture of who and what failed to register in episcopal correspondence of these two centuries of Late Antiquity, as it comes down to us today.

CASE-STUDIES OF BREAKDOWN OF STRUCTURES OF DEPENDENCE

Case-Study 1. *Augustine of Hippo* (395–430)

Augustine's letters, particularly those in the Divjak collection, are important witnesses to the episcopal court in the first quarter of the fifth century, even if the evidence they bring to bear on the process of litigation is at times difficult to assess. As Mayer points out, Augustine's concept of justice is consistent throughout his works.⁴⁹ It is therefore not surprising that both in matters addressed by the *audientia episcopalis* and appeals by letter to him

⁴⁸ Canon 4 of the Council of Chalcedon; ed. Tanner, p. 89, stipulates: 'Verum tamen episcopum convenit civitatis competentem monasteriorum providentiam gerere.' 'The due care of the monasteries must be exercised by the bishop of the city.' The Roman, Palestinian and Egyptian evidence for this, which is not definitive on the question of property ownership by monks or wealthy monastic founders, is evaluated by Cooper, "Poverty, Obligation, and Inheritance", pp. 173–175. The eastern evidence presented by D. Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks. Spiritual Authority and the Promotion of Monasticism in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, CA, 2002), is more conclusive, and will be discussed in the Conclusion.

⁴⁹ C. Mayer, "Legitimation des Rechts bei Augustinus", in ed. Hellebrand, *Augustinus als Richter*, pp. 60–83, at pp. 75–82.

in his episcopal role we encounter a man who advocates tempering justice with mercy, and forgiveness rather than punishment. To be noted also is the fact that it is not always clear in which capacity Augustine is acting, but at any rate his commitments in the episcopal court contributed significantly to his workload, as he complains with some frequency.⁵⁰ His biographer, Possidius, says that Augustine heard cases diligently until it was time for the meal, or else he fasted the whole day while the court was in session.⁵¹ Like Ambrose, Augustine was inclined to take on clerical cases in his court, but there are instances where he accepted others as well.⁵²

Letters 152 and 153, comprising an exchange from 413 or 414 CE between Macedonius, the vicar⁵³ of Africa, and Augustine on the subject of the intercession of bishops on behalf of the guilty, is clearly a case where the *audientia episcopalis* is not involved.⁵⁴ In a lost letter the bishop of Hippo had apparently requested the vicar to intercede on behalf of a condemned person, which Macedonius did, but not without misgivings. He casts doubt on Augustine's statement that the responsibility of his priesthood (*sc.* episcopate) to intervene on behalf of the guilty pertains to the Christian religion, given that penance can be allowed only once.⁵⁵ In a lengthy reply Augustine shows that interceding for the guilty is enjoined by Christ himself; further:⁵⁶

... there are distinct roles for the prosecutor, for the defense attorney, for the intercessor, and for the judge The judgment of God has filled them with fear so that they keep in mind that they need God's mercy on account of their own sins and do not suppose that it counts as a failure in their office if they act mercifully in any way toward those over whom they have the legitimate power of life and death.

In another letter (*Ep.* 85) Augustine relates how he has to endure numerous complaints about the inappropriate lifestyle of Paul, one of his fellow-bishops—complaints apparently brought forward by Paul's congregation formally but not in the context of a bishop's court.⁵⁷ Similarly, in *Letter*

⁵⁰ See n. 17 above. Discussions in C. Munier, "Audientia episcopalis", in ed. Mayer, *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 1, cols. 511–515 at col. 514; Lenski, "Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*", p. 93.

⁵¹ *Vita Augustini* 19.3; ed. Bastiaensen, p. 180, 18–23.

⁵² As in *Ep.* 24*, discussed below. Cf. Lenski, "Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*", p. 84.

⁵³ That is, the representative of the praetorian prefect.

⁵⁴ See the treatment in P.I. Kaufman, "Augustine, Macedonius, and the Courts", *Augustinian Studies* 34/1 (2003), pp. 67–82 with lit.

⁵⁵ *Ep.* 152.2; NBA 22, pp. 518–520; trans. Teske, WSA 2/2, p. 388.

⁵⁶ *Ep.* 153.8; NBA 22, p. 530; trans. Teske, WSA 2/2, p. 394.

⁵⁷ NBA 21/2, pp. 730–733; trans. Teske, WSA 2/1, pp. 341–342.

251 complaints have been made to Augustine by the people of Germanicia against the priest Secundinus, and the bishops orders a catholic layman to investigate whether the objections are coming from heretics.⁵⁸ In other letters we find Augustine acting as a legal adviser outside his own court. In *Letter 7**,⁵⁹ through a deacon he advises his fellow-bishop, Novatus of Sitifis, about the case of a widow who was claiming a large sum of money that had been paid to the church of Hippo, where Augustine recommends that the matter be investigated and referred to the *comes Africae*, thus devolving the responsibility onto secular authorities even though the church was involved. In the case of a property dispute brought before Augustine by the Jew Licinius, the bishop advises his fellow-bishop Victor, who allegedly bought Licinius' property from his mother and drove him out, to sort out the affair and admonish the culprit, rather than escalate the matter by referring it to an episcopal court.⁶⁰ *Letter 9** informs us that in the case of a *curialis* who carried off a professed nun and for his sins was beaten illegally by clerics, Augustine once more appeared as a legal adviser, rather than a judge, in a criminal case.⁶¹ The blurring of distinction between civil and ecclesiastical responsibility and, in certain cases, the impotence of both legal codes is lamented by the bishop of Hippo: "You know, after all, how this question tends to wear us down, that is, how these sins are left unpunished without harm to ecclesiastical discipline, or how they ought to be punished by the Church when they cannot be punished by civil laws".⁶² Different again is *Letter 14**, written to a catholic layman, Dorotheus, to inform him that Augustine has a complaint against one of his men but will not reveal the

⁵⁸ NBA 23, pp. 868–869; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, p. 187.

⁵⁹ NBA 23A, pp. 64–67; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 232–240. On this letter see J. Andreau, "La lettre 7* sur les métiers bancaires", in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 165–176; Lenski, "Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*", pp. 86–87; K.K. Raikas, "*Audientia episcopalis*. Problematik zwischen Staat und Kirche bei Augustin", in ed. Hellebrand, *Augustin als Richter*, pp. 84–105, at pp. 88–89.

⁶⁰ *Ep. 8**; NBA 23A, pp. 68–71; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 257–258. See Lenski, "Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*", p. 85; Mayer, "Legitimation", pp. 68–69; Raikas, "*Audientia episcopalis*", pp. 90–91. In any case, appeal to the bishop's court was naturally restricted to Christians: see J.D. Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 192.

⁶¹ NBA 23A, pp. 72–77; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 259–261. See Lenski, "Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*", p. 85; Mayer, "Legitimation", p. 68; E.-M. Kuhn, "Rechtsprechung durch den Bischofsrichter. Augustin und die Umsetzung der göttlichen Gerechtigkeit in der Praxis", in ed. Hellebrand, *Augustinus als Richter*, pp. 106–155, at pp. 145–151.

⁶² *Ep. 9*.2*; NBA 23A, p. 72; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 259–260: 'Nosti enim quemadmodum nos solet quaestio ista conterere vel quomodo haec mala impunita salvo regimine Ecclesiae relinquantur vel quomodo debeant ab Ecclesia vindicari, quandoquidem per leges publicas nequeant.'

identity of the man or the nature of his crime for fear that Dorotheus will punish the miscreant excessively because the complaint has been brought forward by a bishop.⁶³ The following letter in the Divjak collection, written to a group of clerics in Thagaste,⁶⁴ specifies that Cresconius, the supervisor of Dorotheus' estate and a married man, had raped a nun, for which offence Augustine had excommunicated him. The clergy are asked first to make Dorotheus promise that he will not punish the offender more severely than Augustine advocates (presumably a beating is meant)⁶⁵ before they divulge Cresconius' name and crime to his master. Although Augustine relates all the details of the case to the clergy of Thagaste and recommends that the man should lose his job, there is no suggestion that the case has been or should be tried in an episcopal court.

In *Letter 10** (422/3 CE) we encounter the serious legal and humanitarian problem posed by Galatian slave-traders who captured over a hundred North Africans and were intercepted by the clergy of Hippo before they set sail with their booty.⁶⁶ Augustine's comment on this situation, that it is "up to the authorities or administrative services, which have charge of how this law or any other passed on this matter can be implemented, to see to it that Africa is no longer being emptied of its native inhabitants,"⁶⁷ indicates that in the absence of action on the part of the government he has felt compelled to step in. In fact, he interrogated the newly enslaved Africans and detained them until such time as their relatives could produce letters from their bishops with *bona fides* of the captives' free status⁶⁸—another compelling example of the authority of the episcopal letter at this time—, then manumitted them, thereby going beyond the law and leaving himself open to a lawsuit from the slave-traders.⁶⁹ Once again, there is no appeal to

⁶³ NBA 23A, pp. 140–141; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, p. 288.

⁶⁴ *Ep.* 15*; NBA 23A, pp. 142–145; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 290–291.

⁶⁵ On beatings see Dossey, "Judicial Violence".

⁶⁶ NBA 23A, pp. 78–87; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 262–266. See J. Rougé, "Escroquerie et brigandage", in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 177–188; Mayer, "Legitimation", pp. 69–70.

⁶⁷ *Ep.* 10*.5; NBA 23A, pp. 82–85; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, p. 264: 'Quarum autem potestatum vel quorum officiorum cura lex ista, vel si qua alia de hac re lata fuerit, habere possit executionem, ut Africa suis non amplius evacuetur indigenis ...' Discussions in Rougé, "Escroquerie", pp. 183–188; J. Szidat, "Zum Sklavenhandel in der Spätantike (Aug. epist. 10*)", *Historia* 34 (1985), pp. 560–571; Lenski, "Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*", p. 87; Mayer, "Legitimation", pp. 69–70.

⁶⁸ *Ep.* 10*.8; NBA 24A, pp. 86–87; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 265–266.

⁶⁹ Dossey, "Judicial Violence", p. 111, remarks that, while manumission was permitted in a church, in this case it happened outside the church edifice. See her chapter, p. 111, n. 57, for the contention that "bishops had a jurisdiction over the manumission of slaves that went beyond arbitration".

the bishop's court, probably because the bishop and his clergy had urgently to prevent the imminent departure of the traders and their dubious cargo. This episode highlights the weakness of civil authority and the uncertainty prevailing in North Africa in the first quarter of the fifth century.⁷⁰

Sometimes when he was indeed exercising his role in the *audientia episcopalis* a bishop could be caught between the decrees of different councils, as the case of the reprobate cleric Abundantius illustrates. Augustine heard Abundantius' case and divested him of his parochial duties, then wrote to the primate of Numidia, Xanthippus, to explain that, according to the decrees of the Council of Carthage (13 September 401), the accused had a year after the council to pursue his case, whereas the decree of the earlier Council of Carthage (348 CE) stipulated that any retrial of a cleric in a criminal case be judged by six bishops, a kind of *audientia episcopalis extraordinaria*.⁷¹ Augustine appears to imply that the gross misdeeds of Abundantius demand a speedy retrial at the hands of the bishop of Hippo, lest the sins of the accused be accounted to the church. The case of the *comes*, Classicianus, who wrote to Augustine after his whole household had been placed under collective anathema by Bishop Auxilius in Mauretania Caesariensis, presents a different problematic, again one that does not involve the episcopal court but rather a promised appeal by Augustine to the next African council and to the apostolic see. Here once more Augustine treads the path of mercy, arguing against the justice of collective anathema, which could lead to an innocent person dying without baptism.⁷²

In *Letter 20** Augustine writes to the Roman laywoman, Fabiola, concerning his problems with Antoninus, a young, inexperienced monk whom he himself had too hastily ordained bishop of the small town of Fussala.⁷³ With

⁷⁰ On which in general see C. Lepelley, "La crise de l'Afrique romaine au début du V^e siècle d'après les Lettres nouvellement découvertes de saint Augustin", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'académie des inscriptions et belles lettres* (Paris, 1982), pp. 445–463; Szidat, "Zum Sklavenhandel", p. 369; Rougé, "Escroquerie", p. 183.

⁷¹ *Ep.* 65; NBA 21/1, pp. 538–541; trans. Teske, WSA 2/1, pp. 255–256. On this letter see Harries, *Law, Society, and Authority*, p. 199, n. 28; A. Pugliese, "Der hl. Augustinus als Richter. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der 'episcopalis audientia'", in ed. Hellebrand, *Augustinus als Richter*, pp. 21–59, at pp. 52–53.

⁷² *Ep.* 1*; NBA 23A, pp. 2–7; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 227–229. Cf. *Ep.* 250 on the same subject; G. Folliet, "Le dossier de l'affaire Classicianus (*Epistulae* 250 and 1*)", in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*, pp. 129–146 (pp. 143–146 on the rank of Classicianus); Uhalde, *Expectations of Justice*, pp. 39–41; and Mayer, "Legitimation", pp. 67–68.

⁷³ NBA 23A, pp. 160–189; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, pp. 299–312. See further J.E. Merdinger, *Rome and the African Church in the Time of Augustine* (New Haven, London, 1997), pp. 154–182; W.H.C. Frend, "Fussala: Augustine's Crisis of Credibility (*Ep.* 20*)", in *Les lettres de saint*

a few like-minded people the new bishop used his power to rob and plunder his flock, to the point where, according to Augustine, his crimes were so numerous that there were not enough judges to deal with the cases.⁷⁴ When the disgraced bishop was excommunicated, he appealed the decision and went to Rome to petition Pope Boniface, who appointed episcopal judges to hear the case in Numidia; some of these had been asked for by Antoninus. The trial was protracted and the court convened in more than one location because of complaints both from Antoninus and from the communities which refused to have him reinstated as their bishop. Augustine declined to be part of the process: "I myself was absent, because I do not dare to face the people of Fussala."⁷⁵ As a last resort the bishops' court sent a letter and a copy of the legal proceedings to Rome.⁷⁶ On the death of Boniface (4 September 422) Augustine wrote to his successor, Pope Celestine, explaining the affair, and revealing his sorrow and worry, which brought him within an ace of considering resigning his position.⁷⁷ Although we are not informed about the outcome of Antoninus' case, from both these letters we are given a good idea of the magnitude of Augustine's problem, indeed crisis, in the Antoninus affair, and evidence of the workings of an episcopal court comprised of multiple bishops operating in different locations.

In conclusion, on the basis of his letters we could say that the cases that came before Augustine's episcopal court were wide-ranging and predominantly concerned with clerics, but that at the same time he felt compelled to intervene with the weight of his authority in cases outside his court where the government or the legal system had broken down or was lacking. This reflects the blurring of distinctions between the ecclesiastical and secular spheres. While the exact role of the *audientia episcopalis* in the first half of the fifth century is difficult to determine and is much debated by modern scholars, and despite the fact that, as Munier contests, at best it was a real but limited role,⁷⁸ we find a bishop like Augustine regularly involved in

Augustin, pp. 251–265; S. Lancel, "L'affaire d'Antonius de Fussala: pays, choses et gens de la Numidie d'Hippone saisis dans la durée d'une procédure d'enquête épiscopale", *ibid.*, pp. 267–285; and C. Munier, "La question des appels à Rome d'après la Lettre 20* d'Augustin", *ibid.*, pp. 287–299; Lenski, "Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*", pp. 85–86.

⁷⁴ *Ep.* 20*.6–7; NBA 23A, pp. 164–167.

⁷⁵ *Ep.* 20*.15; NBA 23A, pp. 172–175; trans. Teske, WSA 2/4, p. 306.

⁷⁶ On the significance of Antoninus' case in the development of the process of appealing to Rome see Munier, "La question des appels à Rome", esp. pp. 298–299.

⁷⁷ *Ep.* 209.10; NBA 23, pp. 502–505; trans. Teske, WSA 2/3, p. 397.

⁷⁸ "Audientia episcopalis", in ed. Mayer, *Augustinus-Lexikon*, p. 515.

secular criminal trials⁷⁹ and on other occasions, as in *Letter 10**, side-stepping the episcopal court and exercising his authority in a power vacuum. Frustrating and complicated as the evidence about the bishop's court in this period may be, together with the legal codes Augustine's episcopal letters occupy a sovereign place in interpreting the phenomenon.

Case-Study 2. *Pelagius I of Rome (556–561)*

The 96 letters of Pelagius I, conveniently collected in an edition of 1956,⁸⁰ indicate that the shift to “micro-management” had taken place. Pelagius' father John was a *vicarianus*, either a deputy to the praetorian prefect of a civil diocese, or a civil servant on the staff of a *vicarius*.⁸¹ The production of so many letters was aided by Pelagius' notary Valentine.⁸² Pelagius' correspondence depicts a Roman bishop trying to juggle the sometimes conflicting demands of the Three Chapters controversy, along with the disastrous impact on the Roman population of two decades of war between Byzantine forces and the Goths in Italy.⁸³ The archdeacon Pelagius had been the candidate of the Byzantine general Narses, chosen to replace the recalcitrant Vigilius, and was seen as a traitor to the Three Chapters supporters in Rome and northern Italy.⁸⁴ This left him with few friends in high places when the waves of plague and famine wracked Italy after the Gothic wars.

⁷⁹ For details see Lenski, “Evidence for the *Audientia episcopalis*”, p. 96 n. 60.

⁸⁰ P.M. Gassó, C.M. Batlle, eds., *Pelagii I Papae epistulae quae supersunt (556–561)*, Scripta et Documenta 8 (Montserrat, 1956).

⁸¹ *LP* 1, p. 303. See Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs*, Glossary, p. 141, s.v. *vicarianus*. On Pelagius generally, see also C. Sotinel, *EDP* 1, s.v. Pelagius I, pp. 529–536, and the bibliography cited therein.

⁸² *LP* 1, p. 303. 72 are preserved in Ewald's edition of the British Collections, pp. 533–562. Some of these are among the seventeen found in ed. Löwenfeld, pp. 12–21. Another two are found in an appendix to Gregory I's *Registrum*: *Ep.* 5 to Sapaudus of Arles, and *Ep.* 6 to Valerian the Patrician; ed. W. Gundlach, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), pp. 442–446. The survival of the latter two in an appendix to Gregory's *Registrum* challenges Noble's assertion that the papal archives from the fifth and sixth centuries do not survive “in even fragmentary form”, even if the majority do have to be pieced together “almost entirely” from recipients' copies or from special collections like the *Collectio Avellana*, as he asserts (T.F.X. Noble, “Theodoric and the Papacy”, in *Teodorico il Grande e i goti d'Italia. Atti dei congressi* 13 [Spoleto, 1993], pp. 395–425, at p. 397).

⁸³ On the Three Chapters controversy, see Chapter 5 above. See also Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority*, pp. 122–123, on how the bishop of Rome's doctrinal interests and domestic interests coincided in the appointment of the deacon Sebastian as the chief papal agent in Dalmatia (Vigilius, *Ep.* 14).

⁸⁴ *Ep.* 10 to bishops of Tuscia Annonaria (Jaffé 939); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 31–34 (16 April 557). The bishops had not only left communion with Pelagius but had also demanded that he ratify their schism. Cf. *LP* 1, p. 303. See Sotinel, *EDP* 1, s.v. Pelagius I, p. 533.

In a pathetic plea, written at the end of 556, Pelagius asks Sapaudus, bishop of Arles, to send him revenue from the papal estates in Gaul, because the estates in Italy have been rendered desolate and there is no one to recover their value.⁸⁵ Pelagius requests items of clothing for the poor, even “white tunics” which were only worn by the wealthy. He repeats his request for Sapaudus’ aid in 557 (*Ep.* 9), when he commends the Romans who have taken refuge in Arles to the Gallic bishop’s care, and asks him again to help the poor of Rome.

In a letter to the bishop of Heracleia, Pelagius professes himself overcome by grief because of the lack of scruples of those people who demand tribute from the church for fields that are uncultivated. Poverty is everywhere; Pelagius has nothing to live on and as a result cannot help the poor.⁸⁶ Towards the end of his pontificate—between 560 and 8 March 561—Pelagius wrote in desperation to the praetorian prefect of Africa, seeking help. He admits to Boethius that after 25 years of war and devastation in Italy, he needs subsidies to be sent from islands and remote locations to the church of Rome for clerics and the poor.⁸⁷ In a letter to Narses that probably reflects a breakdown with his patron, he tells the patrician in no uncertain terms not to give the property of the poor to those who suffer no want.⁸⁸

Pelagius was less generous when the property or the revenues of his own church were threatened. This reflects the extreme regionalism of the Roman bishops’ crisis management strategies, even within Italy. Pelagius instructs Bishop Severus of Priorato de Turrita (Spoleto) to return to the church of Priorato the sacred vessels sold by the trader Albinus, now a cleric of the church. Sacred vessels cannot be used for profane purposes.⁸⁹ He rebukes John of Nola for having thoughtlessly sought from him permission to sell the sacred vessels of the parish of Suessula.⁹⁰ If this parish cannot possibly survive because of its abject poverty, Pelagius writes, John should incorporate it into the church of Nola and its cult. Again it will be necessary to look after cultivation of the fields so that at least the church of Nola will be up

⁸⁵ *Ep.* 4 to Sapaudus (Jaffé 943); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 11–13 (14 December 556).

⁸⁶ *Ep.* 94 to Bishop Benignus of Heracleia (556–561) (no Jaffé nr.); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 223–224.

⁸⁷ *Ep.* 85 to Boethius, praetorian prefect of Africa (Jaffé 963); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 207–208.

⁸⁸ *Ep.* 90 to Narses the patrician (Jaffé 962); eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 216. 556–561.

⁸⁹ *Ep.* 82 to Severus, bishop of Camerina (Umbria) (Jaffé 966); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 200–202 (end of March 559 to 3 March 561).

⁹⁰ *Ep.* 17 to John, bishop of Nola (Jaffé 976); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 51–52 (September–end December 558).

to paying their revenues. We mentioned in the previous chapter the letter to John and Hilaria that contained Pelagius' remark that bishops of Rome were forbidden to bequeath goods acquired during their term as pope.⁹¹ It can perhaps best be understood in the context of the decree issued by Basil, praetorian prefect under Odovacer, to an assembly of Roman clergy in St Peter's, after the death of Pope Simplicius in 483. The decree prohibited any pope from alienating the goods and ornaments of the churches under penalty of anathema to the vendor,⁹² a measure adopted apparently to prevent prospective popes from bribing their way into election. In his speech to the plebs and populace, Pelagius also avowed his opposition to the practice of simony in attaining preferment to any clerical order, from doorkeeper to bishop, according to the *LP*.⁹³ Not only were the popes forbidden to sell their church's goods, but apparently they could not even leave them as bequests. One can only speculate as to the context of this short letter to John and Hilaria, and ask if the wealthy couple were perhaps asking for a return of their gift after Pelagius' or his predecessor's death, in much the same way as we prefer to make tax deductible donations to charity organizations today.

The administration of papal estates was carefully audited, as two letters of 558 show. In the first, Pelagius reproves Dulcitus, *defensor* of Apulia, for falsifying the date in collecting payments and accumulating funds, thereby causing financial and administrative headaches for Pelagius.⁹⁴ In the second letter, Pelagius orders the *defensor* Vitus to supervise the administration of the papal estates because he will have to collect revenue from the seventh indiction, and requests him to send a report to be lodged in the papal archive, "as is customary".⁹⁵ The importance of the papal notaries in administering the patrimonies is obvious in *Letter* 88 to Melleus the subdeacon. Papal notaries have told Pelagius that since Melleus was put in charge of the *patrimonium* no accounts have been forthcoming from him. Melleus is warned to rectify this omission for his own sake and that of the church.⁹⁶

⁹¹ *Ep.* 26 to Hilaria and John (Jaffé 985); eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 81; cf. Chapter 6, n. 52 above.

⁹² The decree was reversed at the Roman Synod of 502; MGH AA 12, p. 445.

⁹³ *LP* 1, p. 303.

⁹⁴ *Ep.* 12 to Dulcitus, *defensor* (Jaffé 949); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 41–42 (January 558). Cf. *Ep.* 29 (Jaffé 988) to Dulcius, *defensor* of Apulia, in February 559, informing him that a deacon and a bishop have been ordained for the town of Luceria. Gassó and Batlle, p. 41, suggest that Dulcitus and Dulcius are to be identified as the same person.

⁹⁵ *Ep.* 13 to Vitus, *defensor* (Jaffé 950); eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 43 (end August–September 558).

⁹⁶ *Ep.* 88 to Melleus the subdeacon (Jaffé 957); eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 214 (556–561); cf. *Ep.* 28 to Melleus, on what kind of person is to be ordained abbot of a monastery (February 559.)

Pelagius' letters reveal the same expectation as we saw in Gelasius that misdemeanours of clergy will be dealt with by ecclesiastical rather than secular courts. In a letter to King Childebert, Pelagius I expresses his amazement that Childebert has permitted Bishop Sapaudus to appear in court at the behest of another bishop.⁹⁷ Pelagius recommends that in future the laws of the church not be repealed. Sapaudus had only recently been appointed vicar of the apostolic see, at the request of Childebert.⁹⁸

Only in exceptional cases does Pelagius intervene over another bishop's head. It is more usual for him to instruct the local bishop to deal with cases involving laypersons and clergy at the local level. In *Letter* 22 he recalls that he had already deputed the *audientiam* to other judges in the case of a long-running dispute between the churches of Volturmo and Bari, and now refers the matter to three bishops who should find out what the deputy judges decided, and hand down a sentence in writing to the guilty parties, with the assistance of the *defensor* Constantine.⁹⁹ He is pleased to tell other bishops how to resolve law cases which are unworthy of Christians, "as the time, subject and status of the parties demands."¹⁰⁰ He also tells the *defensor* Benegestus how to conduct himself in judicial cases pertaining to clerics.¹⁰¹ A cleric of any rank must address his complaint against a layperson to the judge of the province, but a layperson who wants to have a cleric of any rank deposed must direct his complaints to the bishops in the same city or territory.¹⁰² Obviously the segregation of ecclesiastical and secular business was calculated to favour the cleric under suspicion, not the lay plaintiff.

A distinctive development in the sixth century was the Roman bishop's willingness to use secular force in disciplinary matters, a last resort when the capabilities of the *audientia episcopalis* had been exhausted. These

⁹⁷ *Ep.* 8 to King Childebert (Jaffé 948); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 26–27 (between 3 February and 13 April 557); cf. *Ep.* 5 cited in the note below.

⁹⁸ *Ep.* 5 to Sapaudus (Jaffé 944); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 14–17 (3 February 557); *Ep.* 6 to King Childebert (Jaffé 945); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 18–19 (3 February 557). Pelagius indicates that he has agreed to his request: Sapaudus has become vicar of the see of Rome and has the use of the *pallium*.

⁹⁹ *Ep.* 22 to Bishops Vincent, Geminus and Constant (Jaffé 981); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 67–69.

¹⁰⁰ *Ep.* 96 to Bishop Eleutherius (no Jaffé nr.); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 227–228 (end of 558 to 561?). 'Igitur, auctoritate potiore ducta ad medium, benignior et humanior intellectus qui reperiri poterit ibi, doceat terminare litem, instruat sententiam proferre, prout tempus et res uel qualitas personarum expostulat.'

¹⁰¹ *Ep.* 91 to Benegestus the *defensor* (Jaffé 964); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 217–218 (556–561).

¹⁰² *Ep.* 81 to Sergius the *cancellarius* (Jaffé 965); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 198–199 (between end of March 559 and 3 March 561).

misdeemeanours often went hand-in-hand with schism. One group of letters (*Epp.* 60, 69, 70, 71) shows Pelagius bringing imperial force to bear on the punishment of a dishonest bishop, Paulinus of Fossombrone, one of a group of schismatics, whom we understand to be opponents of the Three Chapters who had broken off communion with Pelagius. In a letter to Narses, he enquires about the delay in the arrival of Paulinus, whom Narses had promised to deliver on another occasion, and urges the general to punish the crimes that Paulinus and other schismatics have committed through Narses' negligence.¹⁰³ Pelagius urges Narses to use his authority as patrician to exert force on them, "since there are a thousand other examples and laws in which it is clearly recognized that those who are tearing the church apart ought to be punished by those with civil powers, not only by exile but also by proscription of their property and harsh imprisonment".¹⁰⁴ These petitions seem to have been fruitless, because at around the same time Pelagius requests the Byzantine *magister militum* John to put the pseudo-bishop Paulinus in chains and send him to the pontiff "for the sake of the peace of the church".¹⁰⁵ The *defensores* also had a crucial role to play in helping John, bringing ecclesiastical authority as well as military power to bear against Paulinus.¹⁰⁶ Pelagius found it necessary to repeat his request to the *magister militum* to arrest Paulinus and send him to Rome. John was urged to chain up all the other clergy designated by the letter-bearer, and either hand them over to the local bishop or send them to Rome.¹⁰⁷ It is interesting that Pelagius would not entrust the list of names of the guilty to writing but only to the memory of the letter-bearer. Pelagius adds confidently that the *defensores* Basil and Oclatinus will assist the church, having just asked them to do so.¹⁰⁸

Another case of Pelagius' appeal to civil authorities surfaces in Pelagius' advice to Elpidius, bishop of Catana, to convey the case of Anastasius, the

¹⁰³ *Ep.* 60 to Narses the patrician (Jaffé 1019); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 159–161 (end of March to shortly after 16 April 559).

¹⁰⁴ *Ep.* 60; eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 161.28–32: 'cum mille alia exempla et constitutiones sint quibus euidenter agnoscitur, ut facientes scissuras in sanctam ecclesiam, non solum exiliis sed et proscriptione rerum [suarum] et dura custodia, per publicas postestates debeant coherceri.' Our translation.

¹⁰⁵ *Ep.* 69 to John *magister militum* (Jaffé 952); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 178–179 (end of March to shortly after 16 April 559).

¹⁰⁶ *Ep.* 70 to Basil and Oclatinus *defensores* (Jaffé 1028); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 180–181 (beginning of April to shortly after 16 April 559).

¹⁰⁷ *Ep.* 71 to John *magister militum* (Jaffé 1029); eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 182 (beginning of April to shortly after 16 April 559).

¹⁰⁸ See *Ep.* 70 cited above in n. 106.

son of Elpidius' predecessor,¹⁰⁹ to the praetor Leo.¹¹⁰ There had been some problem with Elpidius' election in February 559, as certain parties had worked to secure immunity from the future bishop, and others opposed his election. In a letter to the clergy of Catana, the deacon Elpidius, bishop-elect, is warned not to win over electors by bribes.¹¹¹ These instances show us the limits of the judicial powers of the bishop's court, even in the case of the bishop of Rome.

The Pelagian correspondence is rich in the material pertaining to crisis that is so conspicuously absent in the letters of fifth-century Roman bishops, offering us a rare glimpse of the range of issues that claimed a Roman bishop's attention. Pelagius is just as involved in the Three Chapters controversy as in the day-to-day problems of feeding and clothing the Roman population, and supervising litigation of laypersons and clergy. Unfortunately it is impossible to say if this breadth indicates a change in management style, from a primary focus on heresy and doctrinal matters to micro-management, or just the increasingly scrupulous preservation practices of recipients of papal correspondence. Again it is difficult to determine whether Pelagius' involvement in so many levels of papal administration was the product of necessity *in extremis*, or his personal style. The letter where he tells a count to prune his trees within five or six days before they drop their seeds is indicative of his micro-management.¹¹² In any case, the range of functions that Pelagius adopted as well as the meticulous recording of papal correspondence was carried on by Gregory I from 590, and seems more of a trend than a "one off".

¹⁰⁹ Anastasius is only known from this reference: Gassó, Batlle, p. 183.

¹¹⁰ *Ep.* 72 to Elpidius (Jaffé 1030); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 183–184 (April 559); cf. *Epp.* 23, 42.

¹¹¹ *Ep.* 23 (Jaffé 982); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 70–72 (2 February 559).

¹¹² *Ep.* 76 to Gurdimer comes (Jaffé 1034); eds. Gassó, Batlle, p. 191 (April 559).

CONCLUSION

EVIDENCE FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN EPISCOPAL LETTERS

The methodological challenges of using letters as a source for crisis management in Late Antiquity are many, as discussed in Chapter 2. With all their shortcomings as sources for interpreting the events of the fifth and sixth centuries, however, episcopal letters remain one of our most valuable sources on the strategies adopted by bishops in East and West throughout this turbulent period in the history of the Later Roman Empire. The crises faced by bishops in Late Antiquity have much in common with those faced by leaders today: displaced peoples, including refugees, asylum seekers, exiles and prisoners of war; natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and famine; religious controversies, especially dogmatic divisions within Christianity; violent conflict; the breakdown of structures of dependence; and social abuses. While the definition of social abuse has changed considerably over fifteen centuries, the definition of corruption has remained much the same, in ecclesiastical institutions as much as anywhere else. Civil and ecclesiastical legislation was used to normalize corrupt practices such as simony, if they could not be stamped out by bishops. In all of the instances of crisis listed above, epistolary networks were one of the few means that bishops had at their disposal, to intervene.

The coverage of crisis in the letters written by individual bishops from different regions is uneven. As we stressed in relation to natural disasters in Chapter 4, crisis in the fifth and sixth centuries is reported much more frequently in works of history, rhetoric, apologetics and philosophy than in letters. Comparison with other literary sources has shown that the manifest lack of evidence of natural disasters in letters is endemic to the epistolary genre. This is not a surprising fact given the disparate and sometimes *ad hoc* ways in which their letters were transmitted. Other narrative sources are more “crisis oriented”, as Noble puts it, while episcopal letters are meant to conceal as much as they reveal.¹ We rely, therefore, on chronicles, histories

¹ “Theodoric and the Papacy”, p. 398. Noble was speaking only of letters of the bishop of Rome, but the statement is true of episcopal letters as a whole, within the limits of our investigation.

and liturgical compositions, rather than on letters, for some understanding of the impact of natural disasters during the period in question and how they were explained, processed and spiritualised.

Episcopal letters from our period are also silent on other topics of considerable moment, such as political crises. This passing over in silence of catastrophes seems to be particularly acute in Roman episcopal sources. For example, the threefold sack of Rome in 408–410, led by the Visigoth Alaric, is not mentioned by Innocent I, the incumbent of the bishopric at the time, apart from a passing reference to the reason for his presence in Ravenna in 409/410 “because of the most pressing difficulties of the Roman people,”² (though we do not know if he went to petition Honorius for help, or perhaps to escape danger to his own person).³ Similarly the Vandal conquest of Carthage in 439, which forced refugees to flee to Rome and caused food-shortages (admittedly of human manufacture), does not figure in the letters of Bishop Sixtus III; and, perhaps most surprising of all, the successful diversion of the Huns in 452 by a Roman senate delegation led by Bishop Leo Magnus is not mentioned in Leo’s own letters.

It is the context of episcopal preoccupation with catastrophes that may account for the total absence of letters pertaining to the eventful episcopal career of Ephrem of Amida, during which he was responsible for rehabilitating the city of Antioch from two successive earthquakes as well as other disasters: distressing emergencies may simply have militated against letter-writing when action was called for instead. Nevertheless, letters were an important means of managing crises in the absence of better communication networks and centralized agencies for dealing with particular problems. What is rather surprising is how strongly the old forms and functions of epistolary address persisted in the context of war, social upheaval, religious violence, natural disaster and the concomitant widespread poverty.

² *Ep.* 16 to Marcian, bishop of Niš; PL 20, 519B: ‘Verum nunc in Ravennati urbe mihi constituto, propter Romani populi necessitates celeberrimas ...’. See G.D. Dunn, “The Care of the Poor in Rome and Alaric’s Sieges”, in eds. G.D. Dunn, D. Luckensmeyer, L. Cross, *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, vol. 5: *Poverty and Riches* (Strathfield, 2009), pp. 319–333.

³ Cf. Zosimus, *Hist. nov.* 5.45.5; ed. F. Paschoud vol. 3/1: *Livre V, Zosime. Histoire nouvelle*, Collection des Universités de France (Paris, 2003), p. 67; Sozomen, *HE* 9.7.1; eds. J. Bidez, G.C. Hansen, trans. A.-J. Festugière, B. Grillet, *Histoire ecclésiastique. Livres VII–IX, Sozomène*, SC 516 (Paris, 2008), p. 408.

STRATEGIES OF CRISIS MANAGEMENT

As we have seen in our survey of more than two thousand letters from Greek and Latin-speaking bishops across the later Roman empire from 410 to 590 CE, common strategies of crisis management included both epistolary and other responses. Crisis management through letters included petitioning, dogmatic instruction, discipline and administration, containment and social exclusion.⁴ The success of these strategies relied on the strength of a bishop's social networks, the most important bond being that of the patron-client, as discussed in Chapter 7. Social exclusion could be both epistolary and non-epistolary. Other non-epistolary responses included diplomatic embassies, although these carried letters; synods and councils; proscriptions; material aid; violent coercion; liturgical responses; and material aid. These strategies of crisis management are discussed below with examples.

Petitioning

In this strategy the sovereign tactic consisted of using personal networks to petition others for help, either for the writer(s) or on behalf of others. Petitioning worked both horizontally and from the bottom up. Targets included highly-placed friends, nobles, other bishops, and imperial officials. We have demonstrated in two case-studies the gamut of advocates—bishops, sophists, imperial officials, and even the empress—whom Bishop Theodoret of Cyrrhus could call upon both to provide aid to refugees and to address the plight of tenant-farmers in his diocese who were financially crippled by successive crop failures.⁵ For his part Gelasius of Rome protested successfully on three occasions to Emperor Theodoric against those who had gone to royal courts unlawfully while concealing their status as clerics,⁶ while Pelagius I complained that Childebert had permitted Bishop Sapaudus to appear in court at the behest of another bishop.⁷ Bishops of Rome, notably Leo, Felix, Gelasius, Anastasius II and Hormisdas, petitioned the imperial family in their combats against heresy, Gelasius wrote to engage

⁴ These strategies show some overlap with the thirteen types of letters identified in Chapter 2 above: 1. Polemical; 2. Dogmatic; 3. Pastoral; 4. Consolation; 5. Friendship; 6. Disciplinary; 7. Administrative; 8. Recommendation; 9. Advice; 10. Admonition; 11. Hortation; 12. Decree; 13. Judgement.

⁵ See Chapter 3, Case-study 4, and Chapter 4, Case-study 2.

⁶ *Frgs.* 11, 13; Thiel, pp. 489, 490, and *Ep.* 46; Ewald, pp. 521–522.

⁷ See Chapter 7, Case-study 2.

Theodoric and Hereleuva in his concerns about poverty,⁸ and Pelagius II enlisted the assistance of Emperor Maurice against invasion by Lombards.⁹ North African bishops like Augustine and Possidius petitioned Rome¹⁰ when they saw no other avenue of solving or averting a crisis at home. Imperial responses to petitions could take the form of an interdiction, which prevented the offender from inheriting property or serving in the army or civil service, and/or a simple order of exile or relegation, as we see in the cases of Nestorius, Theodoret, Severus of Antioch, Fulgentius and Vigilius.¹¹ As we discussed in Chapter 3, in its turn exile or relegation could amount to a death sentence, depending on where the exile was sent. Petitioning by letter was a strategy in initiating the ransom of captives, as we see in letters of Bishop Faustus of Riez to Bishop Ruricius of Limoges,¹² and of Bishop Avitus of Vienne.¹³

Dogmatic Instruction

This strategy, which operated both from the top-down and horizontally, worked best with mass media saturation, for example by circulating synodical letters (as we saw in the case of the *DM*), decretals (for example, those of Gelasius and Hormisdas), and *Festal Letters*, the Alexandrian equivalent of broadsheets.¹⁴ Dogmatic letters could also be used to renounce a former position, as we see in the *Constitutum* of Vigilius of Rome.¹⁵ Polemical and dogmatic letters were the best means of instruction, along with letters of advice, admonition, hortation, decree and judgement, as is amply illustrated throughout the controversy around Nestorius,¹⁶ the Acacian schism,¹⁷ and Paul the Black.¹⁸ Instruction in a crisis usually involved the use or abuse of the author's spiritual authority: the strategy of spiritual bullying and/or

⁸ *Frg.* 36; Thiel, p. 502.

⁹ Pelagius II, *Ep.* 1 to Maurice; ed. L. Hartmann, MGH Epp. 2 (Berlin, 1899), pp. 440–441.

¹⁰ Augustine, *Ep.* 20* (the case of Antoninus of Fussala, on which see Chapter 7, Case-study 1); *Epp.* 91, 104 (on Possidius).

¹¹ See the five case-studies in Chapter 3.

¹² *Epp.* 103, 104.

¹³ See e.g. *Epp.* 49, 10, 35.

¹⁴ On Theophilus of Alexandria's *Festal Letters* 16 and 17, dealing with the crisis of the Origenist monks in Alexandria, see P. Allen, "Stage-Managing Crisis", pp. 170–171. On the use to which Cyril of Alexandria put the *Festal Letter* see Chapter 4, Case-study 1.

¹⁵ See Chapter 3, Case-study 3.

¹⁶ See Chapter 5.

¹⁷ See Chapter 5.

¹⁸ See Chapter 5, Case-study 2.

promising spiritual rewards is particularly evident in letters to emperors and kings. Spiritualizing a crisis was another common strategy, as we see in the letters of Augustine dealing with poverty, or in those of Leo I and Gelasius, where attacking heresy is commonly treated as a holy war. An appeal to the writer's authority was often backed by an appeal to secular and/or ecclesiastical law and the use of legalistic terminology, for example in Gelasius¹⁹ and Augustine.²⁰

Discipline and Administration

Intervening in or engineering episcopal elections was also a favourite strategy in crisis, as demonstrated by Leo I's intercession for the Chalcedonian Timothy Salofaciolus against Timothy Aelurus as patriarch of Antioch²¹ and by the letters recommending the election of Paul the Black over a century later.²² Pastoral and disciplinary letters abound in bishops' correspondence, particularly when the authors are dealing with clerical or social abuse, the bishops of Rome being especially exercised by such matters.²³

Containment

Along the lines of "Don't mention the war" (unless it is going on elsewhere), the strategy of containment involved leaving things out of the epistolary record deliberately. The prevalence of this strategy is difficult to assess because of the poor survival rates for episcopal correspondence in this period and the threat of censorship in political hot spots, but by using contemporaneous records from chronicles, histories, and hagiography we conclude that the bishops of Rome especially did not like to admit to security breaches. We have pointed out that natural disasters did not figure largely in episcopal correspondence, in comparison with other types of crisis, notably religious conflict and religious violence. Some of the information that bishops did not wish to record in writing, for example Pelagius I's list of schismatics to be brought back to Rome in chains,²⁴ could be committed to the letter-bearer to convey verbally, because the information was sensitive for security or other reasons.

¹⁹ *Epp.* 1, 27; Thiel, pp. 287–311, 422–435.

²⁰ *Ep.* 24*. See further Chapter 7, Case-study 1.

²¹ See Chapter 5.

²² See Chapter 5, Case-study 2.

²³ See further Chapter 6, Case-study 2.

²⁴ *Ep.* 69 to John *magister militum* (Jaffé 952); eds. Gassó, Batlle, pp. 178–179.

Social Exclusion

This strategy was used by bishops in their response to heresy and took several forms. Its most serious manifestation was blacklisting, that is, threatening or pronouncing anathemata, and/or removing names from the diptychs read aloud in the liturgy. As in the case of Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople, this practice could continue long after the death of the offender. The deposition of clergy in a bishop's jurisdiction was another form of handling crisis, one much in evidence after Chalcedon, as was demonizing an opponent, as we saw in the case of Synesius of Cyrene.²⁵ Ordering public penance, for example in Gelasius' condemnation of Bishop Misenus,²⁶ and seeking imperial backing through letters of petition that blackened the names of one's rival, demonstrated in the case of Leo of Rome vs. Timothy Aelurus, were other popular strategies of social exclusion. Issuing heresiologies that likened the non-orthodox of their day to more ancient heretics—especially the much-hated Arians—via the most tenuous dogmatic genealogies was a common tactic in synodical letters, which a new bishop disseminated to his episcopal colleagues on his consecration. Indices, or lists of forbidden books, were another weapon in the bishop's arsenal, used for example by Gelasius in his letter *De libris accipiendis et non accipiendis*²⁷ and copied by Hormisdas.²⁸

Diplomatic Embassies

These routinely departed with letters, gifts, bribes or tribute. One of the most famous representations to the imperial court is the consignment of "gifts" sent by Cyril of Alexandria before the Council of Ephesus,²⁹ but Leo I and Hormisdas also availed themselves of similar strategies before the Councils of Chalcedon and in the context of the Acacian schism respectively.³⁰ Other bishops, deacons, *defensores ecclesiae* or *apocrisarii* were dispatched as agents or letter-bearers on embassies—such envoys could (usually) be trusted to impart sensitive information verbally.

²⁵ See Chapter 6, Case-study 1.

²⁶ *Ep.* 30; Thiel, pp. 437–447.

²⁷ *Ep.* 42; Thiel, pp. 454–471. Trans. in Neil, Allen, *Documents from Gelasius I*, forthcoming, where the attribution to Gelasius is vindicated.

²⁸ *Ep.* 125; Thiel, pp. 931–938.

²⁹ See Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria. Select Letters*, pp. 66–67 n. 8.

³⁰ See Chapter 5.

Synods and Councils

Convening local synods was an episcopal strategy in times of crisis over disciplinary or dogmatic matters. We find the North African bishops Aurelius and Augustine, all the Roman bishops, and the patriarchs of Constantinople managing various crises in this way. Vetoing or boycotting ecumenical councils convened by an emperor was a further tactic, one employed by Leo I regarding the Councils of Ephesus II and Chalcedon,³¹ as was the manipulation of conciliar *acta* or refusing to endorse them.

Proscription

It was common practice to proscribe books that had been deemed heretical. Under various bishops of Rome Manichean writings were burned in public ceremonies outside churches or otherwise destroyed,³² as were the apocryphal scriptures of the Priscillianists.³³ These purgative activities were aided by the issuing of lists of indexed works, such as those of Gelasius and Hormisdas to which we referred above as a means of social exclusion.³⁴ Indeed social exclusion was both an epistolary and a non-epistolary strategy. Proscription could also be applied to persons, such as the authors of texts deemed heretical, as in the case of Priscillian,³⁵ and the authors of the Three Chapters.³⁶ Imperial proscription obviously bleeds into violent coercion, our next category.

Violent Coercion

At the beginning of his patriarchate in Alexandria Cyril expelled the Jewish community and confiscated their possessions, while Novatian churches were closed;³⁷ such actions were a frequent episcopal strategy but one which is rarely made explicit in bishops' letters. Imperial troops could be used to coerce, imprison or exile heretics and schismatics, as we observed in

³¹ See Chapter 5.

³² See, e.g., Gelasius: *LP* 1, p. 255; *Ep.* 42.8; ed. Thiel, p. 467.

³³ Leo Mag., *Ep.* 15.15 to Turibius of Astorga; eds. Schipper, van Oort, p. 70.

³⁴ See nn. 27 and 28 above.

³⁵ See, e.g. Leo Magnus' reference to the imperial proscription of Priscillian and several of his disciples in the preface to *Ep.* 15 to Turibius of Astorga; eds. Schipper, van Oort, p. 52.

³⁶ Justinian's condemnation of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, Ibas of Edessa and Theodore of Mopsuestia, was reiterated at the Council of Constantinople II in 553, treated in Chapter 5 above.

³⁷ Socrates, *HE* 7.7, 7.13.

the cases of Augustine and the Donatists,³⁸ Leo and the Manicheans,³⁹ and Pelagius I and the Three Chapters schismatics.⁴⁰

Liturgical Responses

Bishops also availed themselves of liturgical strategies to explain, process and spiritualise crises. Some thirty years after the sack of Rome by the Arian Goth Alaric in 410, Leo devoted a sermon to the event, a liturgical commemoration, the homilist tells us himself, that was poorly attended whereas it should have been a reminder of God's past mercies.⁴¹ In the face of Visigothic incursions in Gaul Sidonius Apollinaris instituted the Rogations ceremonies, which he adopted from Bishop Mamertus of Vienne,⁴² while Severus of Antioch commemorated the end of civil war, Hunnic and Persian invasions, and earthquakes in several of his hymns.⁴³

Material Aid

During the displacements of population and the series of natural disasters during the fifth and sixth centuries there were many instances of bishops offering asylum or sanctuary in churches and monasteries as well as other forms of material aid. Bishop Symmachus of Rome, for example, was prepared to donate food, money, clothing and relics to exiled bishops.⁴⁴ Ephrem of Antioch helped his people rebuild their city twice after earthquakes, once in his capacity as *comes Orientis* and on a second occasion as patriarch.⁴⁵ Under the Roman bishops Leo and Gelasius we find rebuilding and refurbishing of shrines, churches and public buildings after invasions and sieges, together with famine relief. During the episcopate of Caesarius of Arles we have examples of the ransoming of prisoners and captives, acts of mercy recorded also in the letters of Avitus of Vienne.⁴⁶

³⁸ See Chapter 5 on Donatism.

³⁹ See Chapter 3 on Manicheism.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 7, Case-study 2.

⁴¹ Leo Mag., *Sermo* 84. See Neil, *Leo the Great*, pp. 118–120.

⁴² *Epp.* 7.1, 5.14.

⁴³ Discussion of all three kinds of liturgical commemorations in Allen, "Stage-Managing Crisis", pp. 163–169.

⁴⁴ *LP* 1, p. 263. See further Chapter 3.

⁴⁵ See further Chapter 4.

⁴⁶ On the ransoms paid by Caesarius and Avitus see Chapter 3.

REGIONALISM OF EPISCOPAL RESPONSES TO CRISIS

In seeking to understand the differences between crisis management strategies across the empire, it is important to stress the regionalism of episcopal responses. In Chapter 2 we discussed the regional variations that can be identified within three major geographical and linguistic groupings: Roman bishops, other western bishops, and Greek-speaking (including African) bishops, who are profiled in the Appendix to this volume.

In comparison with the rich variety of epistolary sources from bishops of Rome in the fifth and sixth centuries, from the Greek-speaking bishops of the empire we have little stable or comprehensive evidence on crisis management from letters, and indeed few letter-collections of any magnitude have survived. It is not likely that Greek-speaking bishops would have differed greatly among themselves as far as crisis management strategies were concerned. However, it is important to highlight the haphazard nature in which the Greek letters were often transmitted, the disproportionate concentration on doctrinal issues which we find in the many letters preserved in conciliar collections, and the large numbers of letters which are not accounted for, possibly as the result of religious conflict, wars, and natural disasters in the sixth century in particular. In comparison with the several hundred letters that survive from the bishops of Rome in the fifth century, from Constantinople from 406 to 489 (that is, from the beginning of the tenure of Bishop Atticus to the death of Bishop Fravitta) only about 45 letters from a total of eight bishops survive. The *prima facie* impression that the Greek-speaking bishops of the fifth and sixth centuries did not indulge in micro-managing crises, large or small, to the extent that the bishops of Rome did may then be a result of the disparity in the numbers of surviving letters.

NON-EPISCOPAL RESPONSES

While bishops were significant figures in late-antique crisis management, it is evident that they were not alone in trying to resolve crises. Other officials had an important role to play, including *curiales*, provincial governors, senators, and *comites*. In Chapter 4 we rejected Wiemer's view that town councils from the fifth century onwards played an insignificant role in dealing with food-shortages, leaving the bishop to gain in profile as a spiritual leader and advocate for the poor. Rapp has also clearly demonstrated that the decline in the curial class has been much exaggerated in modern

scholarship, though there was a polarization within it, between rich and poor *curiales*.⁴⁷ In particular, the *defensores* (*defensor civitatis* and *defensor ecclesiae*) were appointed to protect the needs of the oppressed, and bishops had a crucial role in the appointment of both. Imperial support for the institutionalized church reached its peak under Justinian I, with legal force added behind the many disciplinary measures effecting clerics that were ratified in church councils.⁴⁸ Bishops were also given oversight of curial roles, in an edict of 530, indication of their full integration in municipal administration.⁴⁹

Monks and abbots of monasteries, particularly in Syria, were significant figures in the establishment of alternative sources of spiritual authority, judgement and protection. We mentioned in the previous chapter Canon 4 of Chalcedon, entitled, "Against monks doing anything against the will of their own bishop or founding a monastery, or taking on worldly concerns".⁵⁰ The implementation of this canon was driven by the new emperor Marcian, against the supporters of the rogue archimandrites Isaac, Dalmatius and Eutyches.⁵¹ Monasteries and martyr shrines, as well as charitable institutions such as poorhouses, were brought under the urban bishops' control, making them "satellites of their own authority and influence".⁵² Beggars were required to register with the city's bishop, to keep them out of monasteries and martyr shrines.⁵³ However, several of the eastern epistolary sources demonstrate that although the bishop was technically in charge, the archimandrite also held great power, especially in disciplinary matters.⁵⁴

Our study of crisis management in episcopal letters demonstrates clearly that the dichotomy between the bishop as 'civil servant' and the bishop as spiritual leader in times of crisis is a false one. It is probably better to say

⁴⁷ Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, pp. 279–280.

⁴⁸ Justinian, *Nov.* 131.1 (545); eds. Schoell et al., *Corpus iuris civilis*, vol. 3, pp. 644–645.

⁴⁹ *CJ* 1.4.26, p. 42; trans. Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, pp. 288–289.

⁵⁰ 'De honore monachorum, et ut nullis se actibus vel ecclesiasticis vel saecularibus misceant, nec alienum servum praeter conscientiam domini sui recipiant.' Ed., trans. Tanner, pp. 89–89*. The prehistory of this canon is discussed on p. 89* n. 3.

⁵¹ Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, pp. 236–238.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 239, citing Canon 8, ed. Tanner, pp. 91–91*.

⁵³ Canon 11, ed. Tanner, pp. 92–92*.

⁵⁴ Allen, "Severus of Antioch and Pastoral Care", pp. 397–399. The letters of Severus include an interesting case of an *audientia episcopalis*, consisting of multiple bishops plus the *comes Orientis*, sitting in judgement on a monk. The monk is disciplined by Severus and the other monks told to obey their archimandrite or face not ecclesiastical but civil law.

that the two functions morphed as the situation required. This conclusion approximates Rapp's elegant description of the late-antique bishop as a 'new urban functionary'.⁵⁵

Bishops created as many crises as they resolved by pursuing local interests above all others, and making the rooting out of heresy their first priority. We do find in the letters of bishops creative attempts to find solutions to human suffering, but not as often as we see evidence of them using letters to wield power for ends that were less noble, at least from a modern perspective.

⁵⁵ Rapp, *Holy Bishops*, p. 274.

APPENDIX

ANCIENT AUTHOR PROFILES

For the sake of brevity, the following list is restricted to episcopal authors of the fifth and sixth centuries from whom more than one or two letters survive. Profiles of each of these bishops are presented according to region and linguistic origins, with references to critical editions of their letters, as appropriate.

GREEK AUTHORS

Alexandria and Egypt

Theophilus of Alexandria

Sedit 385–412. From Theophilus we have at least 23 letters (*CPG* 2593–2615) preserved either whole or in part through a complex process of transmission. Few of these letters have survived in their entirety, and those that have owe their existence to their inclusion in Jerome's collection of letters. Fragments of Theophilus' epistolary output are found in sources as diverse as Palladius, Cosmas Indicopleustes, Severus of Antioch and Justinian, and they survive not only in Greek but also in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Arabic and Armenian.

Of the 26 *Festal Letters* that Theophilus would have composed we have remnants or translations of *Letters* 1, 3, 5, 6, 10, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22 and 24 (*CPG* 2580–2591).¹ Text of complete *Festal Letters* 16, 17 and 19 from Jerome's letter-collection in CSEL 55, pp. 159–181, 185–211 and 213–233; Eng. trans. in N. Russell, *Theophilus of Alexandria*, *The Early Church Fathers* (London, New York, 2007), pp. 101–117, 118–139 and 183–159; translations of selected fragments of 1, 5, 6 and 10 at 48–49. The most extensive Greek fragments of other letters are found in M. Richard, *Opera Minora* 2 (Turnhout, Leuven, 1977) nr. 39.

¹ Cf. A. Favale, *Teofilo d'Alessandria* (345 c.–412). *Scritti, Vita e Dottrina*, Biblioteca del "Salesianum" 41 (Turin, 1958), pp. 6–9.

Cyril of Alexandria

Patriarch of Alexandria from 412 to 444. Cyril is the author of at least 110 surviving letters, some of which have survived in fragmentary form in Greek, while others have come down to us in Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian and Arabic translations and fragments. There is no surviving intentional letter-collection as such; rather the list made in *CPG* 5301–5411 is a compilation largely along chronological lines (*Epp.* 75 and 76, and possibly also *Ep.* 82, are out of order), drawing on conciliar *acta*, where Cyril's role was significant, and other sources, among whom are Severus of Antioch and Justinian. This compilation includes a number of letters written not by Cyril but to him: *Letters* 3 and 5 from Nestorius, *Letter* 12 from Celestine, *Letter* 15 from Acacius of Beroea, *Letters* 22, 35, 38, 47 and 66 from John of Antioch or his synod, *Letter* 29 from Alypius of Constantinople, *Letter* 30 from Maximian of Constantinople, *Letter* 36 from Paul of Emesa (but ultimately from John of Antioch), *Letters* 51 and 52 from Sixtus of Rome, *Letter* 73 from Rabbula of Edessa and *Letter* 75 from Atticus of Constantinople. In addition several *spuria* are included in the list (*Epp.* 80, 86, 87 and 88).

The most important collections of texts are found in *La Bibliothèque du Deïr-Amba Shenoudi. 2. Actes du Concile d'Éphèse*. Texte copte, ed. and trans. U. Bouriant, Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire (Paris, 1892) for *CPG* 5406–5409; ed. E. Schwartz, *Codex Vaticanus gr. 1431 eine antichalkedonische Sammlung aus der Zeit Kaiser Zenos*, Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-philologische und historische Klasse, XXXII, 6. Abhandlung (Munich, 1927); and ACO 1/1, pp. 1–7. Eng. trans. of all letters in J.I. McEnerney, *St. Cyril of Alexandria. Letters 1–50 and Letters 51–110*, 2 vols., FOTC 76 and 77 (Washington, DC, 1987). See also R.Y. Ebied and L.R. Wickham, eds. and trans., *A Collection of Unpublished Syriac Letters of Cyril of Alexandria*, CSCO 359 (Louvain, 1975; text), CSCO 360 (Louvain, 1975; trans.) for *Letters* 40, 44, 45, 46 and 55; L.R. Wickham, ed. and trans., *Cyril of Alexandria. Select Letters* (Oxford, 1983) for *Letters* 4, 17, 40, 44, 45, 46, 55 and 83.

In addition there are 29 *Festal Letters*, announcing the dates of the beginning Lent and of Easter, the traditional prerogative of the Alexandrian patriarchs. These are found in PG 77, 401–981 (*CPG* 5240); new text and French trans. in progress by P. Évieux (†) et al., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie. Lettres Festales*, SC 372, 392 and 434; Eng. trans. of this edition is in progress in P.R. Amidon (trans.) and J.J. O'Keefe (intro.), *St. Cyril of Alexandria. Festal Letters 1–12*, FOTC 118 (Washington, DC, 2009).

Cyril was probably the most prolific exegete in Christian antiquity, devoting himself to elucidating both Old and New Testaments. He was also a dogmatician and polemicist of great stature. A list of his extensive works can be found in *CPG* from 5200 to 5411.

Synesius of Cyrene

Synesius was elected bishop of Ptolemais in the Pentapolis probably in February 411 and was consecrated only on 1 January 412. He died mid-413.

From him we have 156 letters (*CPG* 5640), 49 of which date from his episcopate. We have used the edition of A. Garzya, trans. D. Roques, *Synésios de Cyrène*. Tome II. *Correspondance. Lettres I–LXIII*, and Tome III. *Lettres LXIV–CLVI* (Paris, 2000). The manuscript tradition of these letters is very rich: they are transmitted in 261 manuscripts. In addition, because of the popularity of Synesius' letters through the Byzantine period, they are cited many times in an indirect tradition. Synesius composed a number of other prose works and ten hymns (*CPG* 5630–5639).

Dioscorus I of Alexandria

Sedit 441–451. About 9 letters of a dogmatic nature survive (*CPG* 5452–5461), mostly in Syriac translation and fragmentary; three have survived thanks to having been cited at the Council of Ephesus. See *CPG* for details of the various editions.

Timothy Aelurus of Alexandria

Sedit 454–477 (but in exile 460–475). Eight letters survive from his time in exile in Gangra (*CPG* 5476–5481, 5484–5485), some fragmentary and all in Syriac, as well as a refutation of Chalcedon, prayers, and works against Leo of Rome and Eutyches. Fragments are transmitted in the writing of Severus of Antioch, and there is one surviving fragment of a lost historical work. See R.Y. Ebied and L.R. Wickham, "A Collection of Unpublished Letters of Timothy Aelurus", *JTS* ns 21 (1970), pp. 321–369. See also F. Nau, *PO* 13 (1919), pp. 241–247.

Theodosius of Alexandria

Sedit 535–566. From what must have been a considerable output from a long and influential patriarchate, we have only thirteen letters from Theodosius, mostly surviving in a collection of anti-Chalcedonian documents in Syriac translation, the *DM*. As well we have a small number of homilies preserved in Greek (fragments), Syriac, Coptic and Arabic, an address to the empress

Theodora (Syriac fragments) and two theological tractates in Syriac translation.²

Damian of Alexandria

Sedit 578–606. Five letters survive in Syriac (*CPG* 7240–7244), three preserved in the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian and two being unedited. There are also fragments of a treatise.

Constantinople

Atticus of Constantinople

Sedit 406–425. Five letters are extant (*CPG* 5651–5655), one of which is in Syriac. One homily and some fragments also survive.

Nestorius of Constantinople

Nestorius became patriarch in 428, was banished in 431, and died c. 450. 17 letters survive in whole or in part (*CPG* 5665–5682), the majority of which owe their survival to the fact that they were included in conciliar collections and were sometimes also translated into Latin. The texts are in ACO 1. Others survive in fragmentary form in the works of Philoxenus of Mabbog, Severus of Antioch, Justinian, Evagrius Scholasticus and Barhadbešabba. About 30 of Nestorius' homilies survive, many in fragmentary form, and a group of polemical writings.

Maximian of Constantinople

Sedit 431–434. Three letters survive (*CPG* 5770–5772), preserved in conciliar *acta* (ACO 1.1.3 and 1.1.7).

Proclus of Constantinople

Sedit 434–446 (or 447). About ten letters survive (*CPG* 5896–5897, 5900, 5901, 5907, 5908, 5910, 5914 [fragmentary], 5915), including his famous dogmatic *Tome* to the Armenians. Some of the letters were composed by a group of people of whom Proclus seems to have been one. They are have been edited by a variety of scholars.

Flavian of Constantinople

Sedit 446–449. Six letters survive in conciliar *acta* (*CPG* 5930–5931, 5933–5936). See ACO 2.2.1.

² See further Van Roey, Allen, *Monophysite Texts*, pp. 23–56, 144–251.

Anatolius of Constantinople

Sedit 449–458. Six letters are extant (CPG 5956–5961), one of which is fragmentary. They are transmitted in the *acta* of the Council of Chalcedon (ACO 2.4; 2.1.3; 2.5).

Acacius of Constantinople

Sedit 472–488. Two genuine letters survive (CPG 5990–5991), one in Latin translation and the other in Syriac in the *Church History* of Zachariah Scholasticus. No other works survive.

John II of Cappadocia, Patriarch of Constantinople

Sedit 518–520. We have eight letters of a doctrinal and disciplinary nature (CPG 6828–6835), to be found in ACO 3 and in Latin translations in PL 63, 429–508. No other works survive.

Epiphanius of Constantinople

Sedit 520–535. Three letters (CPG 6838–6840) and some canons are extant.

*Jerusalem**Juvenal of Jerusalem*

Sedit 422–458. Two letters survive (CPG 6710–6711), both co-written with others and surviving in ACO 1.1.7 pp. 124–125; 2.5, p. 9.

*Armenia**Acacius of Melitene*

D. after 431. One letter is preserved in conciliar *acta* (ACO 1.4, pp. 118–119) and another two in Armenian translation (CPG 5793–5795). Also extant is a homily which Acacius delivered at the Council of Ephesus.

*Antioch**John of Antioch*

Sedit 429–441. 57 of John's letters survive (CPG 6301–6354, 6356–6358), the vast majority of them preserved in conciliar collections. These texts are in ACO 1. Also transmitted are a homily and a refutation of the *Twelve Anathemata* of Cyril of Alexandria (CPG 6355 and 6360).

Domnus of Antioch

Sedit 442–449. Three letters survive (*CPG* 6508–6510), two of which are in Syriac and owe their survival to being cited at the Council of Ephesus.

Peter Mongus of Antioch

Sedit 482–490. Two letters (*CPG* 5495–5496) are preserved in the *Church Histories* of Zachariah Scholasticus and Evagrius Scholasticus.

Severus of Antioch

Sedit 512–518; d. 538. Because of the imperial condemnation of his person and works in 536, for the most part Severus' letters survive in early Syriac translations rather than in the original Greek. They have come down to us in several groups. Originally they were divided into three classes: those before his patriarchate, those during his patriarchate, and those after his expulsion from his see in 518 until his death in Egypt in 538. These contained 4, 10 and 9 books respectively. In addition there were letters outside these 23 books. The total number of letters must have exceeded 3759, of which fewer than 300 survive, thus less than one-fifteenth of the total.

1. In the first group we have 123 letters translated by the priest Athanasius of Nisibis in 669 CE. The Syriac text of this selection was edited early in the twentieth century by E.W. Brooks and translated into English (*The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis* [Oxford, London, 1902–1903]). These letters deal solely with ecclesiastical affairs and are not in chronological order. However, at the beginning of each letter its place in the original collection of 23 books is stated.
2. In the second group there are 117 scattered letters, again edited and translated by E.W. Brooks on the basis of 28 Syriac manuscripts (in PO 12/2 [Paris, 1915] and 14/1 [Paris, 1920]). In only 26 of these do we find any indication of what book the letter originally belonged to, and once again the rationale behind the ordering of the collection is unclear.
3. Next we have another six letters preserved in the *Church History* of Ps. Zachariah Scholasticus (Book 9.11, 13, 16, 20, 22 and 23).
4. At least four letters survive in a Coptic translation (*CPG* 7070 (9), (12), (13) and (14)), and two in Arabic (*CPG* 7070 (15) and (16)).
5. Three so-called letters of Severus to Sergius the Grammarian survive in an early Syriac translation made by Paul of Edessa after 519. These compositions are really theological tractates. See the study and translation by I.R. Torrance, *Christology after Chalcedon. Severus of Antioch and*

Sergius the Monophysite (Norwich, 1988; repr. as *The Correspondence of Severus and Sergius*, Texts from Christian Late Antiquity 11 [Piscataway, NJ, 2011]).

6. Numerous fragments, mostly in Greek, Syriac and Coptic, are also transmitted.³
7. The *Synodical Letter*, composed by Severus in exile on 26 July 535 on the accession of Theodosius to the patriarchate, is preserved in Syriac in *DM*.
8. A number of unedited letters has been signalled by S.P. Brock, "Some New Letters of the Patriarch Severus", *StP* 12, *Texte und Untersuchungen* 115 (Berlin, 1975), pp. 17–24.

Severus also wrote polemical and dogmatic works, homilies (125 survive), hymns and liturgical compositions.⁴

Anastasius I of Antioch

Sedit 558–570, 593–599. Three letters survive (*CPG* 6954–6957), mostly fragmentary, as well as several treatises and homilies.

Paul of Antioch

Sedit 564–581. We have four letters from him in Syriac translation (*CPG* 7203–7206); some Greek fragments also survive. Syriac text in *DM* (text), pp. 98–114, 177–179, 308–334, 293; (trans.), pp. 68–79, 123–125, 215–233, 205.

Syria (outside Antioch)

Theodoret of Cyrhus

Sedit 423–466 (in exile from 449–451). There are 230 letters which survive in three collections. The first of these, the *Collectio Patmensis* (*CPG* 6239), is edited and translated by Y. Azéma, *Théodoret de Cyr. Correspondance*, vol. 1, SC 40bis (Paris, 1982). The second, known as the *Collectio Sirmondiana* (*CPG* 6240), is likewise edited and translated by Azéma, *Correspondance*, vol. 2, SC 98 (1964), containing *Letters* 1–95, and vol. 3, SC 111 (1965), containing *Letters* 96–147. A further 36 letters are transmitted as conciliar documents edited in *ACO* (*CPG* 6241–6276). There is a complete English translation by T. Halton forthcoming in the Library of Early Christianity

³ For details see Allen, "Severus of Antioch and Pastoral Care", p. 389 n. 10.

⁴ See now F. Alpi, *La route royale. Sévère d'Antioche et les églises d'Orient*, vol. 1. *Texte*, vol. 2. *Sources et documents*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 188 (Beirut, 2009).

(Catholic University of America). Outside these collections there are two letters (*CPG* 6277 and 6278), while *ACO* 4/3.1, pp. 440–446, preserves letters which Theodoret co-authored with others. Theodoret also wrote exegetical, theological, apologetic and historical works, and a small number of his homilies survives.

Meletius of Mopsuestia

Sedit 428–? 11 letters (*CPG* 6455–6465), transmitted in conciliar *acta* (*ACO* 1.4), survive.

Alexander of Hierapolis

Sedit c. 431. 28 letters (*CPG* 6392–6419) survive, mostly preserved in conciliar *acta* (*ACO* 1.4). No other works are extant.

Helladius of Tarsus (Cilicia Prima)

Sedit c. 431. Eight letters in Latin translation (*CPG* 6435–6442) survive in conciliar *acta* (*ACO* 1.4).

Acacius of Beroea

D. after 433. Four of his letters (*CPG* 6477–6480) are transmitted in conciliar *acta* (*ACO* 1.1.7; 1.1.1). In addition we have a confession of faith and Syriac fragments of a letter to Cyril of Alexandria cited by Severus of Antioch.

Maximian of Anazarbus (Cilicia Secunda)

D. after 433. Four letters (*CPG* 6449–6453) survive in conciliar *acta* (*ACO* 1.4), as well as the record of a synodical decision made on Maximian's watch in 433 CE.

Rabbula of Edessa

D. 7 August 435. Three fragmentary letters (*CPG* 6493–6495) in Syriac and a Latin translation survive, together with spiritual works, canons and two homilies.

Jacob Baradaeus

Sedit 542–578. Ten letters survive from him (*CPG* 7170–7179), some in fragments, transmitted in *DM* (text), pp. 90–94, 131–132, 144–145, 165–166, 179–180, 185–186, 187–189, 198–202, 230–231; (trans.), pp. 63–65, 91–92, 100–101, 115–116, 125–126, 129–130, 130–131, 138–140, 161. In the same dossier are transmitted twelve letters or documents either addressed to Jacob or composed by him together with other bishops (*CPG* 7185–7196).

*Asia Minor and Surrounds**Firmus of Caesarea*

D. before 439. We have 46 surviving letters (CPG 6120), most of them short and most dating from the years 431/432. Predominant are letters of friendship. This corpus, which we may assume was but a partial representation of Firmus' epistolary output, owes its survival to being included in a mediaeval manuscript together with other pearls of Christian Greek literature.⁵ Calvet-Sebasti and P.-L. Gatier, *Firmus de Césarée. Lettres*, SC 350 (Paris, 1989). One homily of Firmus survives in Ethiopic translation (CPG 6121).

Firmus was present at the Council of Ephesus in 431 and several of his letters, including one to Cyril of Alexandria afterwards, continue the polemic against Nestorius. John of Antioch wrote one letter to Firmus, but for the rest the bishop of Caesarea is better known to us as perhaps a typical, cultivated, upper-class late-antique bishop who enjoyed contacts with high officials, banquets, the hunt and his authority among the local and neighbouring Christian communities.

Dorotheus of Marcianopolis (Moesia Secunda)

D. after 431. 4 letters (CPG 5781–5785) are transmitted in conciliar *acta* (ACO 1.4), and another in fragmentary form in Syriac (ed. Nau, PO 13, p. 181). A fragment from a dogmatic work survives in Severus of Antioch.

Euthérius of Tyana (Asia Minor)

D. after 433. Five letters (CPG 6148–6152) are preserved in conciliar *acta* (ACO 1.4), and a fragment of a work against Cyril of Alexandria among the writings of Severus of Antioch.

Julian of Halicarnassus (Asia Minor)

D. after 527. Three dogmatic letters written to Severus of Antioch (CPG 7125) have come down to us in Syriac translation, as well as other fragments of a dogmatic nature.

⁵ *Firmus de Césarée. Lettres*, eds., trans. M.-A. Calvet-Sebasti, P.-L. Gatier, SC 350 (Paris, 1989), pp. 10–13, pp. 19–26 for the details.

ROMAN AUTHORS

*Rome**Innocent I*

Sedit 401/402–417. 44 letters, and no other works, survive in the eighteenth-century edition by Coustant (see Abbreviations). *Letter* 43, edited by Cardinal A. Mai, is a fragment found in Arabic;⁶ *Letter* 44 to Aurelius of Carthage is an addition to the corpus.⁷ All 44 letters will receive a new edition and English translation by G.D. Dunn, *The Letters of Innocent I* (forthcoming). Most of Innocent's letters were disciplinary in content, and some preserved important decisions on issues like clerical celibacy and remarriage after the capture of a spouse in war. After Siricius (384–399), Innocent was the second bishop of Rome to use letters in the style of imperial decretals to make disciplinary and dogmatic rulings, which had quasi-legal force.⁸ Several of Innocent's letters may be categorised as “decretals”, although the term is probably anachronistic when applied to this time. Innocent used this style of letter particularly to increase the authority and jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome. The letters of Innocent are preserved in various mediaeval canon law collections: *Collectio Quesnelliana*, *Collectio Dionysiana*, *Collectio Corbeiensis*, *Collectio Avellana*, *Collectio Hispana*, *Collectio Thessalonicensis* and their derivatives.⁹

Famous addressees include Exuperius, bishop of Toulouse, Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, Jerome and John II, bishop of Jerusalem. Innocent seems to have been concerned to circulate his letters in collections. *Letters* 27–33 of Innocent deal with the Pelagian controversy. *LP*'s claim that Innocent was the first son of a bishop of Rome to become pope himself, immediately succeeding his father Anastasius I (399–401/402), has been disproved.¹⁰

⁶ (Jaffé 319); ed. A. Mai, *Spicilegium Romanum* (Rome, 1840), vol. 3, pp. 702–704 (CPL 1643); a Latin retroversion by Mai.

⁷ Coustant's edition of 42 letters is reprinted in PL 20, 463–608.

⁸ On the question of the legal status of Innocent's rulings on remarriage, Dunn argues persuasively that they did not have legal force: see Dunn, “The Validity of Marriage”, pp. 115–116. The same argument can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to Innocent's other decretals.

⁹ On these collections, see D. Jasper and H. Fuhrmann, *Papal Letters in the Early Middle Ages*, History of Medieval Canon Law (Washington, DC, 2001).

¹⁰ G.D. Dunn, “Anastasius I and Innocent I: Reconsidering the Evidence of Jerome”, *VC* 61 (2007), pp. 30–41; and more generally, A. Pollastri, *EDP* 1, s.v. Innocenzo I, pp. 385–391.

Zosimus

Sedit 417–418. Eighteen letters and no other works survive, and again we rely on the edition of Coustant, reproduced in PL 20, 642–686. Zosimus, known as the “Greek pope”, ruled less than a year. His letters mostly concern the Pelagian controversy, on which he underwent a major reversal of opinion. McBrien describes him as “temperamentally impulsive, politically inept, and culturally unprepared for the office”.¹¹ According to *LP*, he “decreed many things for the church”, including an order “that no cleric should drink in a public tavern but only in cellars owned by the faithful, particularly by clerics,” perhaps indicating a rise in public drunkenness among the orders of clergy.

Boniface I

Sedit 418–422. Sixteen letters and no other works survive, edited by Coustant = PL 20, 750–784. The main crisis facing Boniface concerned his succession. He and a rival, Eulalius, were ordained on the same day, and the contested election took over seven months to be resolved by imperial intervention. He also had to resolve the issue of ordination of slaves and of those with obligations to a *curia*.¹²

Celestine I

Sedit 422–432. Seventeen letters survive; these are edited by Coustant = PL 50, 430–558. One of these survives only in Greek, addressed to Flavian, bishop of Philippi, and is edited in ACO 1/1.7, pp. 142–143 (*CPL* 1653). Two fragments, one of a letter to Nestorius, one of a letter to the clergy of Constantinople, are preserved in the testimonies of the Fathers adduced at the Council of Chalcedon, edited in ACO 2.2/1, pp. 41–42. Celestine’s letters are translated into Italian by F. Gori, *Papa Celestino Epistolario*, Collana di Testi patristici 127 (Rome, 1996). We also have a fragment of a sermon (*CPL* 1654). One of Celestine’s decrees on religious life was said to be “kept safe in the church archive”, according to the early sixth-century redaction of the *LP*. The schism that had occurred in the previous pontificate continued, with some Romans refusing to be in communion with Celestine.¹³

¹¹ R. McBrien, *Lives of the Popes. The Pontiffs from St Peter to Benedict XVI*, rev. ed. (New York, 2005), p. 67. See also A. Pollastri, *EDP* 1, s.v. Zosimo, pp. 392–397.

¹² See A. Pollastri, *EDP* 1, s.v. Bonifazio, pp. 398–403.

¹³ See F. Gori, *EDP* 1, s.v. Celestino, pp. 406–415.

Sixtus III

Sedit 432–440. Three letters survive in the Latin *Acta* of the Council of Ephesus I, and a Greek version in ACO 1/1.7, pp. 143–145 (*CPL* 1655). Sixtus was accused of an unspecified charge by a layman, one Bassus, and had to face an episcopal synod, which cleared his name, according to *LP*. The record of the pope's trial, known as *Gesta de Xysti purgatione*,¹⁴ is apocryphal, being composed in the sixth century in the context of Pope Symmachus' dispute with Laurentius.¹⁵

Leo I

Sedit 440–461. Leo was the most prolific bishop of Rome of the fifth century.¹⁶ The 143 letters attributed to Leo in PL 54 are generally accepted as genuine,¹⁷ making the corpus the largest surviving papal letter-collection before the time of Gregory the Great.

In addition to these, 30 letters not written by Leo are included in PL 54. Nineteen of these are letters addressed to Leo by some of the most significant figures of the age, including the eastern imperial family, as well as Eutyches, whose dogmatic teachings led to the convening of the Council of Ephesus in 449 (*Ep.* 21), and the patriarch of Constantinople, Flavian (*Epp.* 22 and 26), to whom Leo addressed his famous *Tome* (*Ep.* 28). A further nine letters consist of exchanges between other parties: Peter Chrysologus to Eutyches (*Ep.* 25), Hilary the deacon to Pulcheria about the Robber Synod (*Ep.* 46), four letters from the western imperial family to Theodosius II requesting a new council (*Epp.* 55–58), and three polite refusals from Theodosius (*Epp.* 62–64). The collection also includes two edicts of Valentinian: his edict of 445 on the punishment of Manichees (*Ep.* 8), and a *Constitution* addressed to Aetius *magister militum*, supporting Leo's decision against Hilary of Arles (*Ep.* 11). In 431 Cyril of Alexandria sent Leo a letter, now lost, in which he sought help from the deacon of Celestine (as Leo was then) against the pretensions of Juvenal of Jerusalem.¹⁸ From his wide network of correspondents

¹⁴ Ed. E. Wirbelauer, *Zwei Päpste in Rom. Der Konflikt zwischen Laurentius und Symmachus (498–514)*, Studien und Texte (Freiburg, 1993), pp. 262–270.

¹⁵ See Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority*, pp. 208, 236–239; E. Cavalcanti, *EDP* 1, s.v. Sixto III, pp. 415–423.

¹⁶ The following section is based on Neil, *Leo the Great*, pp. 13–15. See also E. Cavalcanti, *EDP* 1, s.v. Leone I, pp. 423–442.

¹⁷ Cf. C. Silva-Tarouca, *Nuovi studi sulle antiche lettere dei papi*, vol. 1, Gregorianum 12, (Rome, 1932), who judged many of these letters suspect or spurious, mostly on the basis of slim stylistic evidence (*Epp.* 27, 36, 39, 43, 47–49, 74, 111–113, 118, 120, 141, 154, 157–158, 160–161).

¹⁸ Cf. *Ep.* 119.4; PL 54, 1044–1045, cf. note [1] where the Ballerini conclude on the basis of

it seems that Leo was a person of considerable influence, in both ecclesiastical and imperial circles, even before his *Tome* was taken up as the formular of orthodoxy at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. His addressees include the eastern emperor Theodosius II, and his sister Pulcheria, Theodosius' successor Marcian, the western emperor Valentinian III, and his mother and regent Galla Placidia.

Apart from the body of dogmatic letters concerning the Eutychian controversy (which are conserved in ACO 2/1 and 2/4), Pelagianism, Priscillianism and Nestorianism, most of Leo's surviving letters have to do with matters of discipline and ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The preservation of so many of Leo's letters for posterity in the papal archive¹⁹ bears witness to the value that was placed on this bishop as an ecclesiastical lawgiver. 97 sermons also survive, edited by A. Chavassee, *Santi Leonis Magni Romani Pontificis tractatus septem et nonaginta*, CCSL 138 and 138A (Turnhout, 1973), which came out in the same year as R. Dolle's first revisions of his four volumes of Leo's sermons with a French translation: *Sermons de Léon le Grand*, SC 22bis, 49bis, 74bis, 200 (Paris, 1961–2003).

Hilary

Sedit 461–468. Eight letters survive from Hilary's pontificate (*Letters* 4 and 6–12, in the edition of Thiel (see Abbreviations), pp. 137–155). There are also two letters written before he became bishop of Rome: *Letter* 1, written by him as deacon, and *Letter* 2 written while he was archdeacon (ed. Thiel, pp. 127–130). An additional three letters were addressed to Hilary: *Letter* 3 from Victorius (ed. Thiel, pp. 130–137) and *Letters* 13 and 14 from the bishops of Tarraconensis (ed. Thiel, pp. 155–158). We exclude from the tally a forgery of Vignier, namely *Letter* 5 from Leontius of Arles (ed. Thiel, pp. 138–139). A fragment of a genuine letter to Nicephorus is preserved in the *acta* of the Synod of Pavia (866 CE) (*CPL* 1663). Hilary's decretal to the East confirmed the decisions of three ecumenical synods of Nicaea, Ephesus and Chalcedon, and endorsed Leo's *Tome*, which had been the object of strong criticism by anti-Chalcedonians in the east, especially the monks of Palestine, even in Leo's lifetime.²⁰

this text that Leo was already an archdeacon under Pope Celestine. In regard to this letter the editors entertain two possibilities: Cyril addressed this letter to Leo, or Cyril actually addressed his letter to Celestine, and Leo found it in the papal archive.

¹⁹ *LP* 1, p. 238.

²⁰ See M.C. Pennacchio, *EDP* 1, s.v. Ilaro, pp. 442–447.

Simplicius

Sedit 468–483. Twenty letters survive in his collections, not including another (*Ep.* 8), addressed to him by Acacius, Patriarch of Constantinople. All 21 are edited by Thiel, pp. 175–214. The ground for the Acacian schism was prepared during his pontificate, with the condemnation of Peter of Alexandria as a “Eutychian heretic” by Acacius.²¹

Felix III

Sedit 483–492. Felix wrote sixteen surviving letters, plus a letter from a Roman synod over which he presided (*Ep.* 11). These seventeen letters are edited by Thiel, pp. 222–277, along with the *acta* of the Roman synods of 487 and 488 (*Ep.* 13), which were promulgated in Felix’ name. A fragment of *Letter* 8 to Emperor Zeno (*CPL* 1666) appears in a letter of the ninth-century Pope Nicholas I (858–867). Felix III was the first demonstrably aristocratic bishop, from a Roman clerical family, and the great-grandfather of Gregory I.²² The candidate of Basilius, head of the senatorial order,²³ Felix was also the first bishop of Rome to serve the new Ostrogothic regime, under Kings Odoacer and Theoderic.

Gelasius

Sedit 492–496. Gelasius’ 43 letters include one letter addressed to him by the bishops of Dardania (*Ep.* 11), and are edited by Thiel, pp. 287–483. *Letter* 15 is an epistolary formular. In addition, we have 49 fragments of other letters (ed. Thiel, pp. 483–510). Another 22 brief letters or fragments are included in S. Löwenfeld, *Epistolae pontificum Romanorum ineditae* (Leipzig, 1895; repr. Charleston, SC, 2010), pp. 1–12. Six lengthy tractates on various topics also survive (ed. Thiel, pp. 510–607), including the pagan feast of the *Lupercalia*. The sixth-century *Gelasian Sacramentary* was wrongly attributed to him. 65 letters found in British manuscripts are listed by P. Ewald “Die Papstbriefe der Britischen Sammlung”, *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde zur Beförderung einer Gesamtausgabe der Quellschriften Deutscher Geschichte des Mittelalters* 5 (1880), pp. 503–596, at pp. 503–526. Several new letters are edited there (*Ep.* 4; ed. Ewald, p. 510;

²¹ See M.C. Pennachio, *EDP* 1, s.v. Simplicio, pp. 449–450.

²² See further R. Bratož, *EDP* 1, s.v. Felice III, pp. 450–457.

²³ J. Richards, *The Popes and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages 476–752* (London, New York, 1979), p. 235. Richards draws this deduction from the information on provenance provided in *LP*.

part of *Ep.* 14, ed. Ewald, p. 514; *Ep.* 16; ed. Ewald, p. 515; *Ep.* 46 to Hereleuva; ed. Ewald, pp. 521–522).²⁴

Anastasius II

Sedit 496–498. Anastasius II wrote six surviving letters, including a *Libellus* (in the edition of Thiel, pp. 615–637). No other works survive. The Acacian schism continued to plague the church, with Anastasius seeking a rapprochement with the East and the Roman clergy falling out of communion with him as a consequence.²⁵

Symmachus

Sedit 498–514. Eighteen letters survive, plus three from Bishop Ennodius of Pavia (*Epp.* 7, 9 and 18); one from King Sigismund (*Ep.* 17); a letter from the eastern bishops (*Ep.* 12) and a *Libellus* by John the Deacon (*Ep.* 8). These are edited by Thiel, pp. 641–734. Symmachus' election was contested by supporters of the rival candidate, Laurentius, for most of his episcopate, and for four years (502–506) Laurentius occupied the papal throne, during which time Rome was in a state of civil war.²⁶

Hormisdas

Sedit 514–523. Hormisdas penned 93 surviving letters, and we have in addition 31 addressed to Hormidas. These include five from Emperor Anastasius (*Epp.* 1, 2, 10, 11 and 38); seven from Emperor Justin (*Epp.* 41, 42, 66, 101, 108, 116 and 145); *Letter* 117 from Empress Euphemia; *Letter* 3 from Bishop Dorotheus of Thessalonica; *Letter* 21 from Bishop Avitus of Vienne; *Letters* 44, 68, 78, 89, 99, 114, 120, 132 and 135 from Justinian (variously described as *comes*, *illustris* and *consul*); *Letter* 136 from Patriarch Epiphanius of Constantinople; *Letter* 148 from Dionysius Exiguus and various letters from aristocrats: *Letter* 69 from Pompeius, *Letter* 70 from Anastasia, *Letters* 71 and 119 from Juliana Anicia and *Letter* 118 from *illustris* Celer. Appended to *Letter* 7 is Hormisdas' famous *Libellus fidei* (CPL 1684), a short document that all eastern bishops were to subscribe if they wanted to be in communion with Rome.

²⁴ On Gelasius' life and times see R. Bratož, *EDP* 1, s.v. Gelasio, pp. 458–462.

²⁵ See P. Bertolini, *EDP* 1, s.v. Anastasio II, pp. 462–464. On Pope Anastasius' role in this schism see E. Schwartz, *Publizistische Sammlungen zum acacianischen Schisma*, *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Abt. NF 10/4 (Munich, 1934), pp. 3–303, at pp. 227–230.

²⁶ See further T. Sardella, *EDP* 1, s.v. Simmacho, pp. 464–473, esp. 470; T. Sardella, *ibid.*, s.v. Lorenzo, antipapa, pp. 473–475; Wirbelauer, *Zwei Päpste in Rom*; and K. Sessa, *Formation of Papal Authority*, p. 32, on the Symmachian Forgeries.

We have excluded from the tally another 26 letters in Hormisdas' collection which were not authored by the pope, namely the *relationes* (*Epp.* 15, 39, 63, 67, 109, 115, 130, 146 and 147); *Letter* 16, a synodical letter or record of the synod of Old Epirus; *Letter* 131, the record of a synod of Constantinople; *Letter* 12 from Emperor Anastasius to the Roman senate, and *Letter* 14, a rescript of the Roman senate to Emperor Anastasius; *Letters* 59, 60, 61, 64, 65, 75, 76, 77, 98, 110, 111 and 115, *exempla suggestionis* of legates to Hormisdas; and *Letter* 102, an *indiculus* from Bishop John or Epiphanius, presbyter of Thessalonica. Hormisdas' letters have been edited by Thiel, pp. 741–988. No other works survive.²⁷

Felix IV

Sedit 526–530. Only one letter of Felix IV survives. It is addressed to Caesarius of Arles, edited by C. De Clercq, *Concilia Galliae. A. 511–A. 695*, CCSL 148A (Turnhout, 1963), pp. 51–52. There is also extant a constitution (*constitutum*) and a death-bed teaching (*praeceptum*). His four-year reign seems to have been rather uneventful, especially when compared with that of his predecessor John I (523–526), whose cooperation with Emperor Justin resulted in his death at the hands of Theodoric in Ravenna. No letters survive from John's episcopate, with the exception of two forged letters in his name.²⁸

Boniface II

Sedit 530–532. As in the case of the previous pope, only one letter, addressed to Caesarius of Arles, survives. It is also edited by C. De Clercq, CCSL 148A, pp. 66–69. No other works survive. Boniface's election was contested by Dioscorus, a Greek from Alexandria, who had been recommended as a candidate for the patriarchate of Alexandria by Pope Hormisdas.²⁹

John II

Sedit 532–535. Neither his date nor place of birth is known, only that he came from a Roman family, his father a certain Projectus (*LP*). He was a priest of San Clemente, and has been identified with the deacon Mercurius, before he adopted the name of John at his election. Only one letter, addressed to the Roman senators, survives, and is edited in ACO 4/2, pp. 206–210 (*CPL* 1692).

²⁷ See T. Sardella, *EDP* 1, s.v. Ormisda, pp. 476–483.

²⁸ See Chapter 2, n. 82 above. See T. Sardella, *EDP* 1, s.v. Giovanni I, pp. 483–487; J.-M. Sansterre, *ibid.*, s.v. Felice IV, pp. 487–492.

²⁹ See E. Bertolini, *EDP* 1, s.v. Bonifacio II, pp. 492–495; *ibid.*, Dioscoro, antipapa, pp. 495–499.

Three letters to Caesarius of Arles, the bishops of Gaul and the clergy of Riez have been preserved in the *Collectio Arelatensis* (ed. C. Munier, CCSL 148, pp. 45–48) and the *Concilia Galliae* (ed. De Clercq, CCSL 148A, pp. 86–89) and one in the *Collectio Avellana* (ed. Guenther, CSEL 35, pp. 320–328).³⁰

Agapitus I

Sedit 535–536. Only seven letters survive. *Letters* 1–4 are included in the *Collectio Avellana* (ed. Guenther, CSEL 35, pp. 330–347), *Letters* 5 and 6 in the *Collectio Arelatensis* (ed. Munier, CCSL 148, pp. 54–57). The seventh is edited by De Clercq in *Concilia Galliae*, CCSL 148A, pp. 96–97. At the start of Justinian's campaign against the Ostrogoths, the newly-elected Agapitus was sent on an embassy to Constantinople, where he died. He was succeeded by Hormisdas' son Silverius, the choice of Theodahad, who was accused of conspiring with the Goths against Belisarius and deposed after just nine months as bishop of Rome (536–537). Silverius died in exile in December 537, and unfortunately left no letters.³¹

Vigilius

Sedit 537–555. *Circa* 16 letters survive, and are found in PL 69, 15–68; plus a letter about Theodore (*CPL* 1695); a judgement of Justinian; and a fragment from the letter or *Constitution about the Three Chapters*.³² As archdeacon, Vigilius was appointed by Belisarius to replace Pope Silverius (d. 537).³³

Pelagius I

Sedit 556–561. 96 letters are edited by P.M. Gassó and C.M. Batlle, *Pelagii I Papae epistulae quae supersunt* (556–561), Scripta et Documenta 8 (Montserat, 1956); 72 are preserved in Ewald's edition of the British Collections, pp. 533–562. Some of these are among the seventeen found in ed. Löwenfeld, pp. 12–21. *Letter* 5 to Sapaudus of Arles, and *Letter* 6 to Valerian the Patrician are both edited by W. Gundlach, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), pp. 442–446. The archdeacon Pelagius had been the candidate of Narses, chosen to replace the recalcitrant Vigilius. As a consequence, he was not accepted by the Roman clergy or the nobility, and “there were no bishops who would ordain him”.

³⁰ See M.C. Pennacchio, *EDP* 1, s.v. Giovanni II, pp. 499–503.

³¹ See O. Bertolini, *EDP* 1, s.v. Agapito I, pp. 504–508, C. Sotinel, *ibid.*, s.v. Silverio, pp. 508–512.

³² On the notaries of Vigilius' letters, see N. Ertl, “Diktatoren frühmittelalterlicher Papstbriefe”, *Archiv für Urkundenforschung* NF 1/1 (1937), pp. 56–132, at pp. 67–70.

³³ See C. Sotinel, *EDP* 1, s.v. Vigilio, pp. 512–529.

Pelagius had to avow his innocence in public before “the entire populace and the plebs”, before they would enter into communion with him.³⁴ *In defensione Trium Capitulorum* (CPL 1703), ed. R. Devreese, *Studi e Testi* 57 (Vatican City, 1932), probably composed while he was a deacon, acting as *apocrisiarius* for his predecessor in Constantinople.³⁵ The Latin translation of the *Apophthegmata Patrum* by the deacons Pelagius and John has been attributed to Pelagius I and John III (561–575) by Petersen.³⁶

Pelagius II

Sedit 579–590. Pelagius sent six surviving letters. Four of these are preserved in Gregory the Great’s *Registrum*: one to Gregory the Deacon (edited by L. Hartmann, MGH Epp. 2 [Berlin, 1899], pp. 440–441), and there are three to Elias of Aquileia and the other bishops of Istria (*ibid.*, pp. 442–467). These four are also edited in ACO 4/5.2, pp. 105–132. The remaining two are both addressed to Aunarius of Autissiodorensis, and are edited by W. Gundlach, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1892), pp. 448–450.³⁷

OTHER WESTERN AUTHORS

The Latin corpus consists of over 708 letters belonging to non-Roman bishops.³⁸ The most substantial collections are those of Augustine, Paulinus, Sidonius and Ruricius. The profiles of western non-Roman bishops and their works are presented according to region and in chronological order.³⁹

Africa

Aurelius of Carthage

Sedit 391/2 to 429/30. Four letters are extant *Letter* I (CPL 393) is edited by C. Munier, *Concilia Africae a. 345–a. 525*, CCSL 149 (Turnhout, 1974), pp. 156–161; *Letter* 2 (CPL 394) in ed. Munier, CCSL 149, pp. 169–172; *Letter* 3 (CPL 395)

³⁴ LP 1, p. 303. Cf. C. Sotinel, *EDP* 1, s.v. Pelagio I, pp. 529–536.

³⁵ Ertl, “Diktatoren frühmittelalterlicher Papstbriefe”, pp. 68–70, asserts that the similarities between this work and Vigilius’ *Constitutum* indicate that Pelagius composed the latter while deacon under Vigilius.

³⁶ J. Petersen, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great in their Late Antique Cultural Background*, Studies and Texts 69 (Toronto, 1984).

³⁷ See C. Sotinel, *EDP* 1, s.v. Pelagio II, pp. 541–546.

³⁸ This figure excludes the 297 letters of Ennodius, since it is impossible to differentiate those that were produced during his episcopate from the rest. See “Ennodius of Pavia” below.

³⁹ We acknowledge Stephen Lake’s help with these profiles.

in PL 56, 495–496; and *Letter 4* (CPL 396) in ed. Munier, CCSL 149, pp. 28–29. There are fragmentary remains of some other works.

Augustine of Hippo Regius

Sedit 395–430. There are two collections of letters: *Letters* 1–270, and the 29 letters discovered in the 1980s (designated by an asterisk). We have used the NBA edition for both: vol. 21/1 (*Epp.* 1–70), vol. 21/2 (*Epp.* 71–123), vol. 22 (*Epp.* 124–184A), vol. 23 (*Epp.* 185–270), vol. 23A (*Epp.* 1*–29*). Translations used are those by R. Teske in WSA, vols. II/1 (*Epp.* 1–99), II/2 (*Epp.* 100–155), II/3 (*Epp.* 156–210), and II/4 (*Epp.* 211–270 and 1*–29*) (Hyde Park, NY, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005).⁴⁰

In the first collection of letters we find several sets of correspondence: with Augustine's friend Nebridius, with Paulinus of Nola and his wife Therasia, with Jerome, Evodius, Pascentius, Longinianus, Nectarius, Consentius, Quodvultdeus and Darius. Within these sets we therefore find letters not only by, but also to, Augustine. In addition, there are letters transmitted in both collections that are written neither by nor to Augustine (*Epp.* 24, 32, 165, 181, 182, 201 and 27*). A great many pieces in the epistolary corpus can be dated accurately.

The letters of Augustine were transmitted in various ways: individually; in small collections with no order; arranged according to addressees; in mediaeval thematic collections like penitentiaries if they were, for example, concerned with the topic of church discipline; or in bulk.⁴¹ In the early 1980s the c. 300 surviving letters of the bishop of Hippo, who died in 428, were augmented by Johannes Divjak's discovery of another 29 pieces, most of them dating from the last decade of Augustine's episcopacy.⁴² The discovery of new letters of Augustine is a good example of how our perceptions of authors and their times can be skewed by the limited nature of what has survived to us. Without the Divjak letters we would have remained unaware, for example, of the systematic people-smuggling which was occurring in the Mediterranean in the 420s against which Augustine took a strong stand.⁴³

It can be assumed that Augustine had both a library and an archive at his disposal, but the Vandal invasion of 429 must have put an end to much

⁴⁰ See the exhaustive and authoritative article by J. Divjak, "Epistulae", in ed. C. Mayer, *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 2 (Basel, 2003), cols. 893–1057; also R.B. Eno, "Epistulae", in ed. A.D. Fitzgerald, *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI, 1999), cols. 298–310.

⁴¹ Divjak, "Epistulae", 907.

⁴² Studied by various authors in *Les lettres de saint Augustin*.

⁴³ *Ep.* 10*.7; discussed in Chapter 6 below.

of the archival material in Hippo Regius.⁴⁴ Other works of this prolific writer include a number of biblical commentaries, philosophical and moral works, polemical writings against Manichees, Donatists, and Pelagians, and a large corpus of sermons.

Capreolus of Carthage

Sedit 430–437. From Capreolus' work only four letters, one in fragmentary form, survive (*CPL* 397–400). The first is addressed to the Council of Ephesus (ed. ACO 1/2, pp. 64–65); the others can be found in PL 53, 847–849; ed. ACO 2/3.3 (Berlin, 1937), pp. vi–x.

Quodvultdeus of Carthage

Sedit 437–454. Two letters of his to Augustine, preserved in the latter's letter-collection (*Epp.* 221 and 223), survive (*CPL* 413a), as well as around twelve sermons and a work entitled *De promissionibus et praedictionibus Dei* (*CPL* 413).

Fulgentius of Ruspe

Sedit c. 507–532. Fulgentius is the author of some 18 letters, edited by J. Fraipont, CCSL 91 and 91A (Turnhout, 1968). Other works include: *Dicta regis Trasamundi et contra ea responsionum liber unus*; *Ad Trasamundum libri tres*. Other non-extant works can be identified from his *Vita*.⁴⁵

Born c. 467 in North African Thelepte (Byzacena) into a prominent family, he became procurator or tax collector at an early age but soon preferred the monastic life. Ordained priest c. 501, and bishop of Ruspe six years later, he was exiled with other Catholic bishops by the Arian Vandal king Thrasamund to Sardinia c. 508/9–c. 516/17, but permitted to return to Carthage to dispute with the king over Arianism, only to be sent into second exile on Sardinia c. 519–523. Thereafter he resumed episcopal duties in Ruspe until his death in 527 or 532.⁴⁶

Longinus of Nubia

D. after 580. Three fragmentary letters (presumably written in Greek) are extant in Syriac translation (*CPG* 7218–7220).

⁴⁴ Divjak, "Epistulae", 908.

⁴⁵ Ed. J. Fraipont, CCSL 91 (Turnhout, 1968), pp. VI–VII.

⁴⁶ Fraipont, CCSL 91, p. VI, dates Fulgentius' death to 527, not 532.

*Italy (outside Rome)**Paulinus of Nola*

Sedit c. 410–431. As well as 51 letters (CPL 202), Paulinus also composed poems.

The text is edited in CSEL 29; trans. P.G. Walsh, *Letters of St. Paulinus of Nola*, vol. 1, *Letters 1–22*, and vol. 2, *Letters 23–51*, ACW 35 and 36 (Westminster, ML, London, 1967). Only three letters (*Epp.* 49, 50 and 51) can definitely be said to date to his episcopate, and none of them contains information on crisis or crisis management.

Peter Chrysologus

Bishop of Ravenna c. 425–450. Only one letter survives (CPL 229), edited in ACO 2/3.1, pp. 6–7 (Latin), ACO 2/1.2, pp. 45–46 (Greek translation), and in A. Olivar, *Los sermones de san Pedro Crisólogo. Estudio crítico*, Scripta et Documenta 13 (Montserrat, 1962), pp. 90–91. A large number of sermons is transmitted under his name but several are spurious (see CPL 227 and 228).

Julian of Eclanum

D. after 454. Five fragmentary letters survive (CPL 775), edited by L. De Coninck, M.J. D'Hont in CCSL 88 (Turnhout, 1977), pp. 335–340, 396–398. A notable opponent of Augustine, Julian refused to condemn Pelagianism. He composed various dogmatic works as well as commentaries on the Song of Songs, prophets and the Book of Job.

Ennodius of Pavia

Sedit c. 514–521. 297 letters (CPL 1487). Text in S. Gioanni, *Ennode de Pavie. Lettres. Tome I, livres I et II*, Collection des Universités de France 383 (Paris, 2006); further volumes are in progress. Most of his letters pertain to his period as deacon of Milan. The only evidence for much of his episcopate is found in letters included in the *Collectio Avellana*. Ennodius also composed miscellaneous works, speeches, poems, hymns, and epigrams: the texts are edited by F. Vogel, *Magni Felicis Ennodi opera*, MGH AA 7 (Berlin, 1885). Ennodius served as secretary to Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, Symmachus, and others. In 515 he took part in an embassy to Constantinople, representing Symmachus in the Acacian schism. He was also part of a second embassy to Emperor Anastasius in 517.

Gaul

Eucherius of Lyon

Sedit c. 428–450. Two letters survive (CPL 491, 493), the second being an ascetic tractate in letter form: ed. B. Krusch, MGH, scr. mer. 3 (Berlin, 1896), pp. 32–39, and PL 50, 711C–726D. Apart from two exegetical works dedicated to each of his sons, we have a *Passio* of the martyrs of Acaunum who perished under Emperor Maximian, which is considered spurious by some (CPL 490).

Faustus of Riez

Fl. c. 455–480. Twelve letters are attributed to him, of which at least two and possibly four are spurious (CPL 963); edited by B. Krusch in MGH AA 8 (*Epp.* 1–5, 15–18 and 20 are by Faustus), and more recently by M. Neri, *Dio, l'anima e l'uomo. L'epistolario di Fausto di Riez* (Rome, 2011). Born c. 410 presumably in Britain, he entered Lérins as monk and was abbot from 433. Around 458 Faustus was elevated as bishop of Rhegium (Provence) but was later banned by Arian Visigothic king Eurich (477–485). He participated in various synods and is considered a leading representative of southern Gallic “semi-Pelagianism”. He died before 500.⁴⁷ Other writings include *De Spiritu sancto* (CPL 982); *De gratia* (CPL 961); *De ratione fidei* (CPL 964). All works including the letters are edited by A. Engelbrecht, *Fausti Reiensis, praeter sermones pseudo-Eusebianos, opera, accedunt Ruricii epistolulae*, CSEL 21 (Vienna, 1891). Identification of authentic *sermones* remains disputed.

Remigius of Reims

Sedit c. 459–533. Only four letters (CPL 1070) and two other works have survived from this extraordinarily long episcopate. Text edited by H. Rochais, CCSL 117 (Turnhout, 1957), pp. 407–413. In addition a poetical work and two versions of his will are extant. It was Remigius who baptised Clovis.

Sidonius Apollinaris

Bishop of Clermont, consecrated 469/470; died c. 487. Author of 146 letters (CPL 987), ed. and trans. W.B. Anderson, Loeb Classical Library 296, 420, 2 vols. (London and Cambridge, MA, 1936, 1965; repr. 1980, 1984); also in MGH AA 8, and in A. Loyen, *Sidoine Apollinaire: Poèmes, Lettres*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1960, 1970). There is one letter to Sidonius (Book 4.2) by Claudianus Mamertus, priest of Vienne, author of the work *De statu animae*, which he dedicated

⁴⁷ K.S. Frank, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 4, cols. 320–321.

to Sidonius. The letters collected in Books 1–7 were intentionally compiled by Sidonius himself, but were probably redacted by their addressee Constantius of Lyon.⁴⁸ Book 8 was added through the urging of the *vir illustris* Petronius of Arles and Book 9 at the insistence of Firminus of the same city.⁴⁹ In this intentional collection derogatory remarks have been excised, and the fewer than 150 letters comprising the collection we have today must exclude many others, especially those composed by Sidonius during his prefecture in Rome, before his consecration as bishop of Clermont in c. 471. We also have his own publication of 24 poems, among them three panegyrics (also in ed. Anderson; *CPL* 986).

Ruricius of Limoges

Sedit c. 485–c. 507/510. Ruricius penned 82 letters, arranged in two books by Faustus of Riez, who included twelve letters addressed to Ruricius; edited by B. Krusch, MGH AA 8 (Berlin, 1887), pp. 299–350.⁵⁰ Recent translations are found in R.W. Mathisen (trans.), *Ruricius of Limoges and Friends. A Collection of Letters from Visigothic Gaul*, TTH 30 (Liverpool, 1999); and M. Neri (ed. and trans.), *Ruricio di Limoges. Lettere* (Pisa, 2009).

The see of Limoges was held by generations of Ruricius' family members, but it had long been vacant under the rule of the Arian Visigothic king, Eurich, after whose death in 485 Ruricius became bishop. He was born c. 440 into senatorial aristocracy in Aquitania or Auvergne, related to other leading families; his son Ommatius was bishop of Tours (from 522) and his grandson, Ruricius II, succeeded him as bishop of Limoges. He married a noblewoman, Hiberia, before 468, and entered the clergy in 477. He undertook an active building programme but was also influenced by Faustus of Riez's asceticism, and was apparently sympathetic to semi-Pelagianism. Venantius Fortunatus commemorated him in an epitaph (*Carmen* 4.5).⁵¹ No other known writings are extant.

⁴⁸ For the scholarly debate over the revision of this collection, see A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York, 2011), pp. 421–497.

⁴⁹ See W.B. Anderson, ed., trans., *Sidonius. Poems Letters I–II*, Loeb Classical Library 296 (London, UK, Cambridge, MA, 1936, repr. 1965), pp. lx–lxiv; J. Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome AD 407–485* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 4, 7–10.

⁵⁰ *Epp.* 1–12 in Krusch's edition are those addressed to Ruricius.

⁵¹ M. Heinzelmann, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 7, col. 1112; K.F. Stroheker, *Der senatorische Adel im spätantiken Gallien* (Tübingen, 1948) nr. 327.

Alcimus Avitus of Vienne

Sedit c. 490–518. 85 letters by Avitus survive; ed. R. Peiper, MGH AA 6/1 (Berlin, 1883), pp. 35–103. A recent translation appears in D. Shanzer and I. Woods (trans.), *Avitus of Vienne. Letters and Selected Prose*, TTH 38 (Liverpool, 2002). Avitus was born c. 460 into Auvergnaise senatorial aristocracy, and a relation of both Sidonius Apollinaris and the emperor Avitus Eparchius. Raised to the episcopate in Vienne in Burgundy c. 490, then still predominantly Arian, he maintained a close association with the Burgundian court. While he failed to convert Gundobad to the catholic faith, Sigismund, Gundobad's successor, converted to orthodoxy under Avitus' influence. Avitus co-chaired the first Burgundian council, the synod of Épaone in 517. His letters attest to a wide circle of correspondents in Gaul, Italy and the East, and to his opposition to Eutychianism, Arianism and Pelagianism. He supported Symmachus in the Laurentian schism and sought to resolve the Acacian schism before his death in 518.⁵² His other writings include six books of poems (*De spiritalis historiae gestis*); *Contra Eutychianam haeresim libro duo*; *Dialogorum cum Gundobado rege testimonia*; *Ex libris seu epistolis contra Arrianos fragmenta quae exstant*; *Ex libris contra phantasma fragmenta* and 31 or 34 homilies; of these last, only three are complete.

Caesarius of Arles

Sedit 502–542. Six letters survive, most of them addressed to bishops of Rome, plus fragments and one encyclical letter. These are edited by G. Morin in CCSL 103 and 104 (Turnhout, 1953), and translated by W. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: Life, Testament, Letters*, TTH 19 (Liverpool, 1994). In 536 control of the region passed to the catholic Franks, which was welcomed by Caesarius. He chaired a series of synods: Agde (506), Arles (524), Carpentras (527), Valence (528), Orange II (529), Vaison (529). At Orange II he formally brought an end to “semi-Pelagianism” with the reassertion of Augustine's teaching on grace.⁵³ Over 250 sermons survive. Other writings include *Regula ad virgines*; *Regula ad monachos*; and *Testamentum*, a commentary on Revelation in sermon form.

Viventiolus of Lyon

C. 520. Only two letters are extant (CPL 1068–1069), ed. R. Peiper, MGH AA 6/2 (Berlin, 1961), pp. 89, 165.

⁵² T. Zotz, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 1, cols. 1307–1308.

⁵³ G. Langgärtner, *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 2, cols. 1360–1362.

Mapinius of Reims

D. c. 550. Only two letters are extant (*CPL* 1062), ed. E. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 3 (Berlin, 1982; repr. Munich, 1978), pp. 126–127, 129.

Nicetius of Trier

D. 566. Only two letters survive (*CPL* 1063), ed. Dümmler, MGH Epp. 3, p. 118.

Eutropius of Valence

Fl. c. 580. Only two letters survive (*CPL* 1095–1096) in PL 80, 9D–20A.

*Spain**Montanus of Toledo*

Sedit 522–531. Two letters are extant (*CPL* 1094) in PL 65, 51A–60A.

*Britain**Patrick of Ireland*

D. 461. One letter to the soldiers of Coroticus and a fragment of another to the bishops *in Campo* (of doubtful authenticity) survive (*CPL* 1099, 1103). The former, written against Coroticus, a British king who had ordered the killing of recently baptized Christians, is edited by L. Bieler, “Liber epistolarum sancti Patricii episcopi”, *Classica et Mediaevalia* 11 (1950), pp. 91–102; and P.C. Hanson, ed., trans., SC 249 (Paris, 1978), pp. 134–152. Both letters are translated in J. Skinner, *The Confession of St Patrick* (London, 1998). In addition we have an autobiographical work, the *Confessio S. Patricii* (*CPL* 1100).

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